

DRAKE

THE ENCHANTED ISLAND

NEW POEMS

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COLLECTED POEMS



COLLECTED POEMS

BY

ALFRED NOYES

VOL. II.

DRAKE

THE ENCHANTED ISLAND

NEW POEMS

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COLLECTED POEMS.

D R A K E.

20 pages

DEDICATED TO
RUDOLPH CHAMBERS LEHMANN.

EXORDIUM.

WHEN on the highest ridge of that strange land,
Under the cloudless blinding tropic blue,
Drake and his band of swarthy seamen stood
With dazed eyes gazing round them, emerald fans
Of palm that fell like fountains over cliffs
Of gorgeous red anana bloom obscured
Their sight on every side. Illustrious gleams
Of rose and green and gold streamed from the plumes
That flashed like living rainbows through the glades.
Piratic glints of musketoon and sword,
The scarlet scarves around the tawny throats,
The bright brass ear-rings in the sun-black ears,
And the calm faces of the negro guides
Opposed their barbarous bravery to the noon ;
Yet a deep silence dreadfully besieged
Even those mighty hearts upon the verge
Of the undiscovered world. Behind them lay
The old earth they knew. In front they could not see
What lay beyond the ridge. Only they heard
Cries of the painted birds troubling the heat

And shivering through the woods ; till Francis Drake
Plunged through the hush, took hold upon a tree,
The tallest near them, and clomb upward, branch
By branch.

And lo, as he swung clear above
The steep-down forest, on his wondering eyes
Mile upon mile of rugged shimmering gold
Burst the unknown immeasurable sea.
Then he descended ; and with a new voice
Vowed that, God helping, he would one day plough
Those virgin waters with an English keel.

So here before the unattempted task,
Above the Golden Ocean of my dream
I clomb and saw in splendid pageant pass
The wild adventures and heroic deeds
Of England's epic age, a vision lit
With mighty prophecies, fraught with a doom
Worthy the great Homeric roll of song,
Yet all unsung and unrecorded quite
By those who might have touched with Raphael's hand
The large imperial legend of our race,
Ere it brought forth the braggarts of an hour,
Self-worshippers who love their imaged strength,
And as a symbol for their own proud selves
Misuse the sacred name of this dear land,
While England to the Empire of her soul
Like some great Prophet passes through the crowd
That cannot understand ; for he must climb
Up to that sovran thunder-smitten peak
Where he shall grave and trench on adamant
The Law that God shall utter by the still
Small voice, not by the whirlwind or the fire.
There labouring for the Highest in himself
He shall achieve the good of all mankind ;
And from that lonely Sinai shall return
Triumphant o'er the little gods of gold
That rule their little hour upon the plain.

Oh, thou blind master of these opened eyes
Be near me, therefore, now ; for not in pride
I lift lame hands to this imperious theme ;
But yearning to a power above mine own
Even as a man might lift his hands in prayer.
Or as a child, perchance, in those dark days
When London lay beleaguered and the axe
Flashed out for a bigot empire ; and the blood
Of martyrs made a purple path for Spain
Up to the throne of Mary ; as a child
Gathering with friends upon a winter's morn
For some mock fight between the hateful prince
Philip and Thomas Wyatt, all at once
Might see in gorgeous ruffs embastioned
Popinjay plumes and slouching hats of Spain,
Gay shimmering silks and rich encrusted gems,
Gold collars, rare brocades, and sleek trunk-hose
The Ambassador and peacock courtiers come
Strutting along the white snow-strangled street,
A walking plot of scarlet Spanish flowers,
And with one cry a hundred boyish hands
Put them to flight with snowballs, while the wind
All round their Spanish ears hissed like a flight
Of white-winged geese ; so may I wage perchance
A mimic war with all my heart in it,
Munitioned with mere perishable snow
Which mightier hands one day will urge with steel.
Yet may they still remember me as I
Remember, with one little laugh of love,
That child's game, this were wealth enough for me

Mother and love, fair England, hear my prayer ;
Help me that I may tell the enduring tale
Of that great scaman, good at need, who first
Sailed round this globe and made one little isle,
One little isle against that huge Empire
Of Spain whose might was paramount on earth,
O'ertopping Babylon, Nineveh, Greece, and Rome,

Carthage and all huge Empires of the past,
He made this little isle, against the world,
Queen of the earth and sea. Nor this alone
The theme; for, in a mightier strife engaged
Even than he knew, he fought for the new faiths,
Championing our manhood as it rose
And cast its feudal chains before the seat
Of kings; nay, in a mightier battle yet
He fought for the soul's freedom, fought the fight
Which, though it still rings in our wondering ears,
Was won then and for ever—that great war,
That last Crusade of Christ against His priests,
Wherein Spain fell behind a thunderous roar
Of ocean triumph over burning ships
And shattered fleets, while England, England rose,
Her white cliffs laughing out across the waves,
Victorious over all her enemies.

And while he won the world for her domain,
Her loins brought forth, her fostering bosom fed
Souls that have swept the spiritual seas
From heaven to hell, and justified her crown.
For round the throne of great Elizabeth
Spenser and Burleigh, Sidney and Verulam,
Clustered like stars, rare Jonson like the crown
Of Cassiopeia, Marlowe ruddy as Mars,
And over all those mighty hearts arose
The soul of Shakespeare brooding far and wide
Beyond our small horizons, like a light
Thrown from a vaster sun that still illumines
Tracts which the arc of our increasing day
Must still leave undiscovered, unexplored.

Mother and love, fair England, hear my prayer,
As thou didst touch the heart and light the flame
Of wonder in those eyes which first awoke
To beauty and the sea's adventurous dream
Three hundred years ago, three hundred years,
And five long decades, in the leafy lanes

Of Devon, where the tallest trees that bore
 The raven's matted nest had yielded up
 Their booty, while the perilous branches swayed
 Beneath the boyish privateer, the king
 Of many young companions, Francis Drake ;
 So hear me and so help, for more than his
 My need is, even than when he first set sail
 Upon that wild adventure with three ships
 And three-score men from grey old Plymouth Sound,
 Not knowing if he went to life or death,
 Not caring greatly, so that he were true
 To his own sleepless and unfaltering soul
 Which could not choose but hear the ringing call
 Across the splendours of the Spanish Main
 From ever fading, ever new horizons,
 And shores beyond the sunset and the sea.

Mother and sweetheart, England ; from whose breast,
 With all the world before them, they went forth,
 Thy seamen, o'er the wide uncharted waste,
 Wider than that Ulysses roamed of old,
 Even as the wine-dark Mediterranean
 Is wider than some wave-relinquished pool
 Among its rocks, yet none the less explored
 To greater ends than all the pride of Greece
 And pomp of Rome achieved ; if my poor song
 Now spread too wide a sail, forgive thy son
 And lover, for thy love was ever wont
 To lift men up in pride above themselves
 To do great deeds which of themselves alone
 They could not ; thou hast led the unfaltering feet
 Of even thy meanest heroes down to death,
 Lifted poor knights to many a great emprise,
 Taught them high thoughts, and though they kept their
souls
 Lowly as little children, bidden them lift
 Eyes unappalled by all the myriad stars
 That wheel around the great white throne of God.

BOOK I.

Now through the great doors of the Council-room
Magnificently streamed in rich array
The peers of England, regal of aspect
And grave. Their silence waited for the Queen :
And even now she came ; and through their midst,
Low as they bowed, she passed without a smile
And took her royal seat. A bodeful hush
Of huge anticipation gripped all hearts,
Compressed all brows, and loaded the broad noon
With gathering thunder : none knew what the hour
Might yet bring forth ; but the dark fire of war
Smouldered in every eye ; for every day
The Council met debating how to join
Honour with peace, and every day new tales
Of English wrongs received from the red hands
Of that gigantic Empire, insolent
Spain, spurred fiercer resentments up like steeds
Revolting, on the curb, foaming for battle,
In all men's minds, against whatever odds.
On one side of the throne great Walsingham,
A lion of England, couchant, watchful, calm,
Was now the master of opinion : all
Drew to him. Even the hunchback Burleigh smiled
With half-ironic admiration now,
As in the presence of the Queen they met
Amid the sweeping splendours of her court,
A cynic smile that seemed to say, "I, too,
Would fain regain that forthright heart of fire ;
Yet statesmanship is but a smother name

For the superior cunning which ensures
Victory." And the Queen, too, knowing her strength
And weakness, though her woman's heart leaped out
To courage, yet with woman's craft preferred
The subtler strength of Burleigh; for she knew
Mary of Scotland waited for that war
To strike her in the side for Rome; she knew
How many thousands lurked in England still
Remembering Rome and bloody Mary's reign.
France o'er a wall of bleeding Huguenots
Watched for an hour to strike. Against all these
What shield could England raise, this little isle,—
Out-matched, outnumbered, perilously near
Utter destruction?

So the long debate
Proceeded.

All at once there came a cry
Along the streets and at the palace-gates
And at the great doors of the Council-room!
Then through the pikes and halberds a voice rose
Imperative for entrance, and the guards
Made way, and a strange whisper surged around,
And through the peers of England thrilled the blood
Of Agincourt as to the foot of the throne
Came Leicester, for behind him as he came
A seaman stumbled, travel-stained and torn,
Crying for justice, and gasped out his tale.
"The Spaniards," he moaned, "the Inquisition!
They have taken all my comrades, all our crew,
And flung them into dungeons: there they lie
Waiting for England, waiting for their Queen!
Will you not free them? I alone am left!
All London is afire with it, for this
Was one of your chief city merchant's ships—
The *Pride of London*, one of Osborne's ships!
But there is none to help them! I escaped
With shrieks of torment ringing in these ears,
The glare of torture-chambers in these eyes

That see no faces anywhere but blind
Blind faces, each a bruise of white that smiles
In idiot agony, washed with sweat and blood,
The face of some strange thing that once was man,
And now can only turn from side to side
Babbling like a child, with mouth agape,
And crying for help where there is none to hear
Save those black vizards in the furnace-glow,
Moving like devils at their hellish trade. . . .”
He paused ; his memory sickened, his brain swooned
Back into that wild glare of obscene pain !
Once more to his ears and nostrils horribly crept
The hiss and smell of shrivelling human flesh !
His dumb stare told the rest : his head sank down ;
He bowed ; he fell ; he strove in agony
With what all hideous words must leave untold ;
While Leicester vouched him, “This man’s tale is true !”
But like a gathering storm a windy moan
Of passion, like a tiger’s, slowly crept
From the grey lips of Walsingham. “My Queen,
Will you not free them ?”

Then Elizabeth,
Whose name is one for ever with the name
Of England, rose ; and in her face the gleam
Of justice that makes anger terrible
Shone, and she stretched her glittering sceptre forth
And spoke, with distant empires in her eyes.

“My lords, this is the last cry they shall wring
From English lips unheeded : we will have
Such remedies for this as all the world
Shall tremble at !”

And, on that night, while Drake
Close in his London lodging lay concealed
Until he knew if it were peace or war
With Spain (for he had struck on the high seas
At Spain ; and well he knew if it were peace
His blood would be made witness to that bond,

And he must die a pirate's death or fly
Westward once more), there all alone, he pored
By a struggling rushlight o'er a well-thumbed chart
Of magic islands in the enchanted seas,
Dreaming, as boys and poets only dream
With those that see God's wonders in the deep,
Perilous visions of those palmy keys,
Cocoa-nut islands, parrot-haunted woods,
Crisp coral reefs and blue shark-finned lagoons
Fringed with the creaming foam, mile upon mile
Of mystery. Dream after dream went by,
Colouring the brown air of that London night
With many a mad miraculous romance.
There, suddenly, some augury, some flash
Showed him a coming promise, a strange hint,
Which, though he played with it, he scarce believed;
Strange as in some dark cave the first fierce gleam
Of pirate gold to some forlorn maroon
Who tiptoes to the heap and glances round
Askance, and dreads to hear what erst he longed
To hear—some voice to break the hush; but bathes
Both hands with childish laughter in the gold,
And lets it trickle through his fevered palms,
And begins counting half a hundred times
And loses count each time for sheer delight
And wonder in it; meantime, if he knew,
Passing the cave-mouth, far away, beyond
The still lagoon, the coral reef, the foam
And the white fluttering chatter of the birds,
A sail that might have saved him comes and goes
Unseen across the blue Pacific sea.
So Drake, too, played with fancies; but that sail
Passed not unseen, for suddenly there came
A firm and heavy footstep to the door,
Then a loud knocking; and, at first, he thought
"I am a dead man: there is peace with Spain,
And they are come to lead me to my doom."
But, as he looked across one shoulder, pride

Checking the fuller watch for what he feared,
The door opened ; and cold as from the sea
The night rushed in, and there against the gloom,
Clad, as it seemed, with wind and cloud and rain,
There loomed a stately form and high grim face
Loaded with deadly thoughts of iron war—
Walsingham,—in one hand he held a map
Marked with red lines ; the other hand held down
The rich encrusted hilt of his great sword.
Then Drake rose, and the other cautiously
Closing the door drew near the flickering light
And spread his map out on the table, saying—
“Mark for me here the points whereat the King
Philip of Spain may best be wounded, mark
The joints of his harness ;” and Drake looked at him
Thinking, “If he betray me, I am dead.”
But the soldier met his eyes and, with a laugh,
Drake, quivering like a bloodhound in the leash,
Stooped, with his finger pointing thus and thus—
“Here would I guard, here would I lie in wait,
Here would I strike him through the breast and throat.”
And as he spoke he kindled, and began
To set forth his great dreams, and high romance
Rose like a moon reflecting the true sun
Unseen ; and as the full round moon indeed
Rising behind a mighty mountain-chain
Will shadow forth in outline grim and black
Its vast and ragged edges, so that moon
Of high romance rose greatly shadowing forth
The grandeur of his dreams, until their might
Dawned upon Walsingham, and he, too, saw
For a moment of muffled moonlight and wild cloud
The vision of the imperious years to be !
But suddenly Drake paused as one who strays
Beyond the bounds of caution, paused and cursed
His tongue for prating like a moon-struck boy’s.
“I am mad,” he cried, “I am mad to babble so !”
Then Walsingham drew near him with strange eyes

And muttered slowly, "Write that madness down ;
Ay, write it down, that madman's plan of thine ;
Sign it, and let me take it to the Queen."

But the weather-wiser seaman warily
Answered him, "If it please Almighty God
To take away our Queen Elizabeth,
Seeing that she is mortal as ourselves,
England might then be leagued with Spain, and I
Should here have sealed my doom. I will not put
My pen to paper."

So, across the charts
With that dim light on each grim countenance
The seaman and the courtier subtly fenced
With words and thoughts, but neither would betray
His whole heart to the other. At the last
Walsingham gripped the hand of Francis Drake
And left him wondering.

On the third night came
A messenger from Walsingham who bade
Drake to the Palace where, without one word,
The statesman met him in an anteroom
And led him, with flushed cheek and beating heart,
Along a mighty gold-gloomed corridor
Into a high-arched chamber, hung with tall
Curtains of gold-fringed silk and tapestries
From Flanders looms, whereon were flowers and beasts
And forest-work, great knights, with hawk on hand,
Riding for ever on their glimmering steeds
Through bowery glades to some immortal face
Beyond the fairy fringes of the world.
A silver lamp swung softly overhead,
Fed with some perfumed oil that shed abroad
Delicious light and fragrances as rare
As those that stirred faint wings at eventide
Through the King's House in Lebanon of old.
Into a quietness as of fallen bloom
Their feet sank in that chamber ; and, all round
Soft hills of Moorish cushions dimly drowsed

On glimmering crimson couches. Near the lamp
An ebony chess-board stood inlaid with squares
Of ruby and emerald, garnished with cinquefoils
Of silver, bears and ragged staves : the men,
Likewise of precious stones, were all arrayed—
Bishops and knights and elephants and pawns—
As for a game. Sixteen of them were set
In silver white, the other sixteen gilt.
Now, as Drake gazed upon an arras, nigh
The farther doors, whereon was richly wrought
The picture of that grave and lovely queen
Penelope, with cold hands weaving still
The unending web, while in an outer court
The broad-limbed wooers basking in the sun
On purple fleeces took from white-armed girls,
Up-kirtled to the knee, the crimson wine ;
There, as he gazed and thought, " Is this not like
Our Queen Elizabeth who waits and weaves,
Penelope of England, her dark web
Unendingly till England's Empire come ;"
There, as he gazed, for a moment, he could vow
The pictured arras moved. Well had it been
Had he drawn sword and pierced it through and through ;
But he suspected nothing and said nought
To Walsingham ; for thereupon they heard
The sound of a low lute and a sweet voice
Carolling like a gold-caged nightingale,
Caught by the fowlers ere he found his mate,
And singing all his heart out evermore
To the unknown forest-love he ne'er should see.
And Walsingham smiled sadly to himself,
Knowing the weary queen had bidden some maid
Sing to her, even as David sang to Saul ;
Since all her heart was bitter with her love
Or so it was breathed (and there the chess-board stood,
Her love's device upon it), though she still,
For England's sake, must keep great foreign kings
Her suitors, wedding no man till she died.

Nor did she know how, in her happiest hour
 Remembered now most sorrowfully, the moon,
 Vicegerent of the sky, through summer dews,
 As that sweet ballad tells in plaintive rhyme,
 Silvering the grey old Cumnor towers and all
 The hollow haunted oaks that grew thereby,
 Gleamed on a casement whence the pure white face
 Of Amy Robsart, wife of Leicester, wife
 Unknown of the Queen's lover a frail bar
 To that proud Earl's ambition, quietly gazed
 And heard the night-owl hoot a dark presage
 Of murder through her timid shuddering heart.
 But of that deed Elizabeth knew nought ;
 Nay, white as Amy Robsart in her dream
 Of love she listened to the sobbing lute,
 Bitterly happy, proudly desolate ;
 So heavy are all earth's crowns and sharp with thorns !
 But tenderly that high-born maiden sang.

SONG.

*Now the purple night is past,
 Now the moon more faintly glows,
 Dawn has through thy casement cast
 ~~~~~  
 Roses on thy breast, a rose ;  
 Now the kisses are all done,  
 Now the world awakes anew,  
 Now the charmed hour is gone,  
 Let not love go, too.*

*When old winter, creeping nigh,  
 Sprinkles raven hair with white,  
 Dims the brightly glancing eye,  
 Laughs away the dancing light,  
 Roses may forget their sun,  
 Lilies may forget their dew,  
 Beauties perish, one by one,  
 Let not love go, too.*

*Palaces and towers of pride  
 Crumble year by year away ;  
 Creeds like robes are laid aside,  
 Even our very tombs decay !  
 When the all-conquering moth and rust  
 Gnaw the goodly garment through,  
 When the dust returns to dust,  
 Let not love go, too.*

*Kingdoms melt away like snow,  
 Gods are spent like wasting flames,  
 Hardly the new peoples know  
 Their divine thrice-worshipped names !  
 At the last great hour of all,  
 When thou makest all things new,  
 Father, hear Thy children call,  
 Let not love go, too.*

The song ceased : all was still ; and now it seemed  
 Power brooded on the silence, and Drake saw  
 A woman come to meet him,—tall and pale  
 And proud she seemed : behind her head two wings  
 As of some mighty phantom butterfly  
 Glimmered with jewel-sparks in the gold gloom.  
 Her small, pure, grey-eyed face above her ruff  
 Was chiselled like an agate ; and he knew  
 It was the Queen. Low bent he o'er her hand ;  
 And "Ah," she said, "Sir Francis Walsingham  
 Hath told me what an English heart beats here !  
 Know you what injuries the King of Spain  
 Hath done us ?" Drake looked up at her : she smiled,  
 "We find you apt ! Will you not be our knight  
 For we are helpless"—witchingly she smiled—  
 "We are not ripe for war ; our policy  
 Must still be to uphold the velvet cloak  
 Of peace ; but I would have it mask the hand  
 That holds the dagger ! Will you not unfold  
 Your scheme to us ?" And then with a low bow

Walsingham, at a signal from the Queen,  
Withdrew ; and she looked down at Drake and smiled ;  
And in his great simplicity the man  
Spake all his heart out like some youthful knight  
Before his Gloriana : his heart burned,  
Knowing he talked with England, face to face ;  
And suddenly the Queen bent down to him,  
England bent down to him, and his heart reeled  
With the beauty of her presence—for indeed  
Women alone have royal power like this  
Within their very selves enthroned and shrined  
To draw men's hearts out ! Royal she bent down  
And touched his hand for a moment. " Friend," she said,  
Looking into his face with subtle eyes,  
" I have searched thy soul to-night and know full well  
How I can trust thee ! Canst thou think that I,  
Thè daughter of my royal father, lack  
The fire which every boor in England feels  
Burning within him as the bloody score  
Which Spain writes on the flesh of Englishmen  
Mounts higher day by day ? Am I not Tudor ?  
I am not deaf or blind ; nor yet a king !  
I am a woman and a queen, and where  
Kings would have plunged into their red revenge  
Or set their throne up on this temporal shore,  
As flatterers bade that wiser king Canúte,  
Thence to command the advancing tides of battle  
Till one ensanguined sea whelm throne and king  
And kingdom ; friend, I take my woman's way,  
Smile in mine enemies' faces with a heart  
All hell, and undermine them hour by hour !  
This island scarce can fend herself from France,  
And now Spain holds the keys of all the world,  
How should we fight her, save that my poor wit  
Hath won the key to Philip ? Oh, I know  
His treacherous lecherous heart, and hour by hour  
My nets are drawing round him. I, that starve  
My public armies, feed his private foes,

Nourish his rebels in the Netherlands,  
Nay, sacrifice mine own poor woman's heart  
To keep him mine—there is no sacrifice  
On earth like this—and surely now stands Fate  
With hand uplifted by the doors of Spain  
Ready to knock : the time is close at hand  
When I shall strike, once, and no second stroke.  
Remember, friend, though kings have fought for her,  
This England, with the trident in her grasp,  
Was ever woman ; and she waits her throne ;  
And thou canst speed it. Furnish thee with ships,  
Gather thy gentleman adventurers,  
And be assured thy parsimonious queen—  
Oh ay, she knows that chattering of the world—  
Will find thee wealth enough. Then put to sea,  
Fly the black flag of piracy awhile  
Against these blackest foes of all mankind.  
Nay ; what hast thou to do with piracy ?  
*Hostis humani generis* indeed  
Is Spain : she dwells beyond the bounds of law ;  
Thine is no piracy, whate'er men say,  
Thou art a knight on Gloriana's quest.  
Oh, lay that golden unction to thy soul,  
This is no piracy, but glorious war,  
Waged for thy country and for all mankind,  
Therefore put out to sea without one fear,  
Ransack their El Dorados of the West,  
Pillage their golden galleons, sap their strength  
Even at its utmost fountains ; let them know  
That there is blood, not water, in our veins.  
Carry thy scheme out to the glorious end,  
And, though at first thou needs must ride alone  
And unsupported, ere that end is reached,  
When I shall give the word, nay, but one word,  
All England shall be up and after thee,  
The sword of England shall shine over thee,  
And round about thee like a guardian fire ;  
All the great soul of England shall be there ;



Her mighty dead shall at that cry of doom  
 Rise from their graves and in God's panoply  
 Plunge with our standards through immortal storms  
 When Drake rides out across the wreck of Rome.  
 As yet we must be cautious ; let no breath  
 Escape thee, save to thy most trusted friends ;  
 For now, if my lord Burleigh heard one word  
 Of all thou hast in mind, he is so much  
 The friend of caution and the beaten road,  
 He would not rest till he had wrecked thy hopes  
 And sealed thy doom ! Go now, fit out thy ships.  
 Walsingham is empowered to give thee gold  
 Immediately, but look to him for more  
 As thou shalt need it, gold and gold to spare,  
 My golden-hearted pilot to the shores  
 Of Empire—so farewell ;” and through the gloom  
 She vanished as she came ; and Drake groped, dazed,  
 Out through the doors, and found great Walsingham  
 Awaiting him with gold.

But in the room  
 Where Drake had held his converse with the Queen  
 The embroidered arras moved, and a lean face,  
 White with its long eavesdropping upon death,  
 Crept out and peered as a venomous adder peers  
 From out dark ferns, then as the reptile flashes  
 Along a path between two banks of flowers  
 Almost too swift for sight, a stealthy form  
 —One of the fifty spies whom Burleigh paid—  
 Passed down the gold-gloomed corridor to seek  
 His master, whom among great books he found,  
 Calm, like a mountain brooding o’er the sea.  
 Nor did he break that calm for all these winds  
 Of rumour that now burst from out the sky.  
 His brow bent like a cliff over his thoughts,  
 And the spy watched him half resentfully,  
 Thinking his news well worth a blacker frown.  
 At last the statesman smiled and answered, “Go ;  
 Fetch Thomas Doughty, Leicester’s secretary.”

Few suns had risen and set ere Francis Drake  
Had furnished forth his ships with guns and men,  
Tried seamen that he knew in storms of old,—  
Will Harvest, who could haul the ropes and fight  
All day, and sing a foc'sle song to cheer  
Sea-weary hearts at night ; brave old Tom Moone  
The carpenter, whose faithful soul looked up  
To Drake's large mastery with a mastiff's eyes ;  
And three-score trusty mariners, all scarred  
And weather-beaten. After these there came  
Some two-score gentleman adventurers,  
Gay college lads or lawyers that had grown  
Sick of the dusty Temple, and were fired  
With tales of the rich Indies and those tall  
Enchanted galleons drifting through the West,  
Laden with ingots and broad bars of gold.  
Already some had bought at a great price  
Green birds of Guatemala, which they wore  
On their slouched hats, tasting the high romance  
And new-found colours of the world like wine.  
By night they gathered in a marvellous inn  
Beside the black and secret flowing Thames ;  
And joyously they tossed the magic phrase  
"Pieces of eight" from mouth to mouth, and laughed  
And held the red wine up, night after night,  
Around their tables, toasting Francis Drake.  
Among these came a courtier, and none knew  
Or asked by whose approval, for each thought  
Some other brought him ; yet he made his way  
Cautiously, being a man with a smooth tongue,  
The secretary of Leicester ; and his name  
Was Thomas Doughty. Most of all with Drake  
He won his way to friendship, till at last  
There seemed one heart between them and one soul

## BOOK II.

So on a misty grey December morn  
Five ships put out from calm old Plymouth Sound ;  
Five little ships, the largest not so large  
As many a coasting yacht or fishing-trawl  
To-day ; yet these must brave uncharted seas  
Of unimagined terrors, haunted glooms,  
And shadowy horrors of an unknown world  
Wild as primæval chaos. In the first,  
The *Golden Hynde*, a ship of eighteen guns,  
Drake sailed : John Wynter, a queen's captain, next  
Brought out the *Elisabeth*, a stout new ship  
Of sixteen guns. The pinnacle *Christopher*  
Came next, in staunch command of old Tom Moone  
Who, five years back, with reeking powder grimed,  
Off Cartagena fought against the stars  
All night, and, as the sun arose in blood,  
Knee-deep in blood and brine, stood in the dark  
Perilous hold and scuttled his own ship  
The *Swan*, bidding her down to God's great deep  
Rather than yield her up a prize to Spain.  
Lastly two gentleman-adventurers  
Brought out the new *Swan* and the *Marygold*.  
Their crews, all told, were eight score men and boys.  
Not only terrors of the deep they braved,  
Bodiless witchcrafts of the black abyss,  
Red gaping mouths of hell and gulfs of fire  
That yawned for all who passed the tropic line ;

But death lurked round them from their setting forth.  
Mendoza, plenipotentiary of Spain,  
By spies informed, had swiftly warned his king,  
Who sent out mandates through his huge empire  
From Guadalchiber to the golden West  
For the instant sinking of all English ships  
And the instant execution of their crews  
Who durst appear in the Caribbean sea.  
Moreover, in the pith of their emprise  
A peril lurked—Burleigh's emissaries,  
The smooth-tongued Thomas Doughty, who had brought  
His brother—unacquitted of that charge  
Of poisoning, raised against him by the friends  
Of Essex, but in luckless time released  
Lately for lack of proof, on no strong plea.  
These two wound through them like two snakes at ease  
In Eden, waiting for their venomous hour.  
Especially did Thomas Doughty toil  
With soft and flowery tongue to win his way ;  
And Drake, whose rich imagination craved  
For something more than simple seamans' talk,  
Was marvellously drawn to this new friend  
Who with the scholar's mind, the courtier's gloss,  
The lawyer's wit, the adventurer's romance,  
Gold honey from the blooms of Euphues,  
Rare flashes from the *Mermaid* and sweet smiles  
Copied from Sidney's self, even to the glance  
Of sudden, liquid sympathy, gave Drake  
That banquet of the soul he ne'er had known  
Nor needed till he knew, but needed now.  
So to the light of Doughty's answering eyes  
He poured his inmost thoughts out, hour by hour ;  
And Doughty coiled up in the heart of Drake.

Against such odds the tiny fleet set sail ;  
Yet gallantly and with heroic pride,  
Escutcheoned pavisades, emblazoned poops,

Banners and painted shields and close-fights hung  
With scarlet broideries. Every polished gun  
Grinned through the jaws of some heraldic beast,  
Gilded and carven and gleaming with all hues ;  
While in the cabin of the *Golden Hynde*  
Rich perfumes floated, given by the great Queen  
Herself to Drake as Captain-General ;  
So that it seemed her soul was with the fleet,  
A presence to remind him, far away,  
Of how he talked with England, face to face,—  
No pirate he, but Gloriana's knight.  
Silver and gold his table furniture,  
Engraved and richly chased, lavishly gleamed  
While, fanned by favouring airs, the ships advanced  
With streaming flags and ensigns and sweet chords  
Of music struck by skilled musicians  
Whom Drake brought with him, not from vanity,  
But knowing how the pulse of men beats high  
To music ; and the hearts of men like these  
Were open to the high romance of earth,  
And they that dwelt so near God's mystery  
Were proud of their own manhood. They went out  
To danger as to a sweetheart far away,  
Who even now was drawing the western clouds  
Like a cymar of silk and snow-white furs  
Close to her, till her body's beauty seemed  
Clad in a mist of kisses. They desired  
Her glittering petulance and her sulky sweet  
Red pouts of anger. They went out to her  
With pomp and ceremony, richly attired  
And girt about with honour as befit  
Souls that might talk with angels by the way.

Light as the sea-birds dipping their white wings  
In foam before the gently heaving prows  
Each heart beat, while the low soft lapping splash  
Of water racing past them ripped and tore

Whiter and faster, and the bellying sails  
Filled out, and the white cliffs of England sank  
Dwindling behind the broad grey plains of sea.

Meekly content and tamely stay-at-home  
The sea-birds seemed that piped across the waves ;  
And Drake, be-mused, leaned smiling to his friend  
Doughty and said, "Is it not strange to know  
When we return yon speckled herring-gulls  
Will still be wheeling, dipping, flashing there ?  
We shall not find a fairer land afar  
Than those thyme-scented hills we leave behind !  
Soon the young lambs will bleat across the combes,  
And breezes will bring puffs of hawthorn scent  
Down Devon lanes ; over the purple moors  
Lavrocks will carol ; and on the village greens  
Around the May-pole, while the moon hangs low,  
The boys and girls of England merrily swing  
In country footing through the flowery dance.  
But many of us indeed shall not return.  
Then the other with a laugh, "Nay, like the man  
Who slept a hundred years we shall return  
And find our England strange : there are great storms  
Brewing ; God only knows what we shall find—  
Perchance a Spanish king upon the throne !  
What then ?" And Drake, "I should put down my helm,  
And out once more to the unknown golden West  
To die, as I have lived, an Englishman."  
So said he, while the white cliffs dwindled down,  
Faded, and vanished ; but the prosperous wind  
Carried the five ships onward over the swell  
Of swinging, sweeping seas, till the sun sank,  
And height o'er height the chaos of the skies  
Broke out into the miracle of the stars.  
Frostily glittering, all the Milky Way  
Lay bare like diamond-dust upon the robe  
Of some great king. Orion and the Plough  
Glimmered through drifting gulfs of silver fleece,

And, far away, in Italy, that night  
Young Galileo, looking upward, heard  
The self-same whisper through that wild abyss  
Which now called Drake out to the unknown West.  
But, after supper, Drake came up on deck  
With Doughty, and on the cold poop as they leaned  
And gazed across the rolling gleam and gloom  
Of mighty muffled seas, began to give  
Voice to those lovely captives of the brain  
Which, like princesses in some forest-tower,  
Still yearn for the delivering prince, the sweet  
Far bugle-note that calls from answering minds.  
He told him how, in those dark days which now  
Seemed like an evil dream, when the Princess  
Elizabeth even trembled for her life  
And read there, by the gleam of Smithfield fires,  
Those cunning lessons of diplomacy  
Which saved her then and now for England's sake,  
He passed his youth. 'Twas when the power of Spain  
Began to light the gloom with that great glare  
Of martyrdom which, while the stars endure,  
Bears witness how men overcame the world,  
Trod the red flames beneath their feet like flowers,  
Yea, cast aside the blackening robe of flesh,  
While with a crown of joy upon their heads,  
Even as into a palace, they passed through  
The portals of the tomb to prove their love  
Stronger at least than death: and, in those days  
A Puritan, with iron in his soul,  
Having in earlier manhood occupied  
His business in great waters and beheld  
The bloody cowls of the Inquisition pass  
Before the midnight moon as he kept watch;  
And having then forsworn the steely sea  
To dwell at home in England with his love  
At Tavistock in Devon, Edmund Drake  
Began, albeit too near the Abbey walls,

To speak too staunchly for his ancient faith ;  
And with his young child Francis, had to flee  
By night at last for shelter to the coast.  
Little the boy remembered of that flight,  
Pillioned behind his father, save the clang  
And clatter of the hoofs on stony ground  
Striking a sharp blue fire, while country tales  
Of highwaymen kindled his reckless heart  
As the great steed went shouldering through the night.  
There Francis, laying a little sunburnt hand  
On the big holstered pistol at each side,  
Dreamed with his wide grey eyes that he himself  
Was riding out on some freebooting quest,  
And felt himself heroic. League by league  
The magic world rolled past him as they rode,  
Leaving him nothing but a memory  
Of his own making. Vaguely he perceived  
A thousand meadows darkly streaming by  
With clouds of perfume from their secret flowers,  
A wayside cottage-window pointing out  
A golden finger o'er the purple road ;  
A puff of garden roses or a waft  
Of honeysuckle blown along a wood,  
While overhead that silver ship, the moon,  
Sailed slowly down the gulfs of glittering stars,  
Till, at the last, a buffet of fresh wind  
Fierce with sharp savours of the stinging brine  
Against his dreaming face brought up a roar  
Of mystic welcome from the Channel seas.  
And there Drake paused for a moment, as a song  
Stole o'er the waters from the *Marygold*  
Where some musician, striking luscious chords  
Of sweet-stringed music, freed his heart's desire  
In symbols of the moment, which the rest,  
And Doughty among them, scarce could understand.



## SONG.

*The moon is up: the stars are bright:  
The wind is fresh and free!  
We're out to seek for gold to-night  
Across the silver sea!  
The world was growing grey and old:  
Break out the sails again!  
We're out to seek a Realm of Gold  
Beyond the Spanish Main.*

*We're sick of all the cringing knees,  
The courtly smiles and lies!  
God, let Thy singing Channel breeze  
Lighten our hearts and eyes!  
Let love no more be bought and sold  
For earthly loss or gain;  
We're out to seek an Age of Gold  
Beyond the Spanish Main.*

*Beyond the light of far Cathay,  
Beyond all mortal dreams,  
Beyond the reach of night and day  
Our El Dorado gleams,  
Revealing—as the skies unfold—  
A star without a stain,  
The Glory of the Gates of Gold  
Beyond the Spanish Main.*

And, as the skilled musician made the words  
Of momentary meaning still imply  
His own eternal hope and heart's desire,  
Without belief, perchance, in Drake's own quest—  
To Drake's own greater mind the eternal glory

Seemed to transfigure his immediate hope.  
But Doughty only heard a sweet concourse  
Of sounds. They ceased. And Drake resumed his tale  
Of that strange flight in boyhood to the sea.  
Next, the red-curtained inn and kindly hands  
Of Protestant Plymouth held his memory long;  
Often in strange and distant dreams he saw  
That scene which now he tenderly pourtrayed  
To Doughty's half-ironic smiling lips,  
Half-sympathetic eyes; he saw again  
That small inn parlour with the homely fare  
Set forth upon the table, saw the gang  
Of seamen reeking from the spray come in,  
Like great new thoughts to some adventurous brain.  
Feeding his wide grey eyes he saw them stand  
Around the crimson fire and stamp their feet  
And scatter the salt drops from their big sea-boots;  
And all that night he lay awake and heard  
Mysterious thunderings of eternal tides  
Moaning out of a cold and houseless gloom  
Beyond the world, that made it seem most sweet  
To slumber in a little four-walled inn  
Immune from all that vastness. But at dawn  
He woke, he leapt from bed, he ran and lookt,  
There, through the tiny high bright casement, there,—  
Oh, fairy vision of that small boy's face  
Peeping at daybreak through the diamond pane!—  
There first he saw the wondrous new-born world,  
And round its princely shoulders wildly flowing,  
Gemmed with a myriad clusters of the sun,  
The magic azure mantle of the sea.

And, afterwards, there came those marvellous days  
When, on that battleship, a disused hulk  
Rotting to death in Chatham Reach, they found  
Sanctuary and a dwelling-place at last.  
For Hawkins, that great ship-man, being their friend,

A Protestant, with power on Plymouth town,  
 Nigh half whereof he owned, made Edmund Drake  
 Reader of prayer to all the ships of war  
 That lay therein. So there the dreaming boy,  
 Francis, grew up in that grim nursery  
 Among the ropes and masts and great dumb mouths  
 Of idle ordnance. In that hulk he heard  
 Many a time his father and his friends  
 Over some wild-eyed troop of refugees  
 Thunder against the powers of Spain and Rome,  
 "Idolaters who defiled the House of God  
 In England;" and all round them, as he heard,  
 The clang and clatter of shipwright hammers rang,  
 And hour by hour upon his vision rose,  
 In solid oak reality, new ships,  
 As Ilion rose to music, ships of war,  
 The visible shapes and symbols of his dream,  
 Unconscious yet, but growing as they grew,  
 A wondrous incarnation, hour by hour,  
 Till with their towering masts they stood complete,  
 Embodied thoughts, in God's own dockyards built,  
 For Drake ere long to lead against the world.

There, as to round the tale with ringing gold,  
 Across the waters from the full-plumed *Swan*  
 The music of a *Mermaid* roundelay—  
*Our Lady of the Sea*, a Dorian theme  
 Tuned to the soul of England—charmed the moon.

## SONG.

## I.

Queen Venus wandered away with a cry,—  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?*—  
 For the purple wound in Adon's thigh;  
*Je vous en prie*, pity me;

With a bitter farewell from sky to sky,  
 And a moan, a moan from sea to sea ;  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,*  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ?*

## II.

The soft Ægean heard her sigh,—  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ?—*  
 Heard the Spartan hills reply,  
*Je vous en prie, pity me ;*  
 Spain was aware of her drawing nigh  
 Foot-gilt from the blossoms of Italy ;  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,*  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ?*

## III.

In France they heard her voice go by,—  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ?—*  
 And on the May-wind droop and die,  
*Je vous en prie, pity me ;*  
 Your maidens choose their loves, but I—  
 White as I came from the foam-white sea,  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,*  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ?*

## IV.

The warm red-meal-winged butterfly,—  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ?—*  
 Beat on her breast in the golden rye,—  
*Je vous en prie, pity me,—*

Stained her breast with a dusty dye  
 Red as the print of a kiss might be !  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,*  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ?*

## V.

Is there no land, afar or nigh,—  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ?—*  
 But dreads the kiss o' the sea? Ah, why—  
*Je vous en prie, pity me !—*  
 Why will ye cling to the loves that die?  
 Is earth all Adon to my plea?  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,*  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ?*

## VI.

Under the warm blue summer sky,—  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ?—*  
 With outstretched arms and a low long sigh,—  
*Je vous en prie, pity me ;—*  
 Over the Channel they saw her fly  
 To the white-cliffed island that crowns the sea,  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,*  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ?*

## VII.

England laughed as her queen drew nigh,—  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ?*  
 To the white-walled cottages gleaming high,  
*Je vous en prie, pity me !*

They drew her in with a joyful cry

To the hearth where she sits with a babe on her knee,  
She has turned her moan to a lullaby,

She is nursing a son to the kings of the sea,

*N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,*

*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ?*

Such memories, on the plunging *Golden Hynde*,

Under the stars, Drake drew before his friend,

Clomb for a moment to that peak of vision,

That purple peak of Darien, laughing aloud

O'er those wild exploits down to Rio Grande

Which even now had made his fierce renown

Terrible to all lonely ships of Spain.

E'en now, indeed, that poet of Portugal,

Lope de Vega, filled with this new fear

Began to meditate his epic muse

Till, like a cry of panic from his lips,

He shrilled the faint *Dragontea* forth, wherein

Drake is that Dragon of the Apocalypse,

The dread Antagonist of God and Man.

Well had it been for Doughty on that night

Had he not heard what followed ; for, indeed,

When two minds clash, not often does the less

Conquer the greater ; but, without one thought

Of evil, seeing they now were safe at sea,

Drake told him, only somewhat, yet too much,

Of that close conference with the Queen. And lo,

The face of Doughty blanched with a slow thought

That crept like a cold worm through all his brain,

"Thus much I knew, though secretly, before ;

But here he freely tells me as his friend ;

If I am false and he is what they say,

His knowledge of my knowledge will mean death."

But Drake looked round at Doughty with a smile

And said, "Forgive me now : thou art not used

To these cold nights at sea ! thou tremblest, friend ;  
Let us go down and drink a cup of sack  
To our return ! " And at that kindly smile  
Doughty shook off his nightmare mood, and thought,  
" I am no sea-dog, but a man of birth !  
The yard-arm is for dogs, not gentlemen !  
Even Drake would not misuse a man of birth ! "  
And in the cabin of the *Golden Hynde*  
Revolving subtle treacheries he sat.  
There with the sugared phrases of the court  
And general sentiments which Drake believed  
Were revelations of the man's own mind,  
Bartering beads for gold, he drew out all  
The simple Devon seaman's inmost heart,  
And coiled up in the soul of Francis Drake.  
There in the solemn night they interchanged  
Lies for sweet confidences. From one wall  
The picture of Drake's love looked down on him ;  
And, like a bashful schoolboy's, that bronzed face  
Flushed as he blurted out with brightening eyes  
And quickening breath how he had seen her first,  
Crowned on the village green, a Queen of May.  
Her name, too, was Elizabeth, he said,  
As if it proved that she, too, was a queen,  
Though crowned with milk-white Devon may alone,  
And queen but of one plot of meadow-sweet.  
As yet, he said, he had only kissed her hand,  
Smiled in her eyes and—there Drake also flinched,  
Thinking, " I ne'er may see her face again,"  
And Doughty comforted his own dark heart  
Thinking, " I need not fear so soft a soul  
As this " ; and yet, he wondered how the man,  
Seeing his love so gripped him, none the less  
Could leave her, thus to follow after dreams ;  
For faith to Doughty was an unknown word,  
And trustfulness the property of fools.  
At length they parted, each to his own couch,

Doughty with half a chuckle, Francis Drake  
With one old-fashioned richly grateful prayer  
Blessing all those he loved, as he had learnt  
Beside his mother's knee in Devon days.

So all night long they sailed ; but when a rift  
Of orchard crimson broke the yellowing gloom  
And barred the closely clouded East with dawn,  
Behold, a giant galleon overhead,  
Lifting its huge black shining sides on high,  
Loomed like some misty monster of the deep :  
And, sullenly rolling out great gorgeous folds  
Over her rumbled like a thunder-cloud  
The heavy flag of Spain. The splendid poop,  
Mistily lustrous as a dragon's hoard  
Seen in some magic cave-mouth o'er the sea  
Through shimmering April sunlight after rain,  
Blazed to the morning ; and her port-holes grinned  
With row on row of cannon. There at once  
One sharp shrill whistle sounded, and those five  
Small ships, mere minnows clinging to the flanks  
Of that Leviathan, unseen, unheard,  
Undreamt of, grappled her. She seemed asleep,  
Swinging at ease with great half-slackened sails,  
Majestically careless of the dawn.  
There in the very native seas of Spain,  
There with the yeast and foam of her proud cliffs,  
Her own blue coasts, in sight across the waves,  
Up her Titanic sides without a sound  
The naked-footed British seamen swarmed  
With knives between their teeth : then on her decks  
They dropped like panthers, and the softly fierce  
Black-bearded watch of Spaniards, all amazed,  
Rubbing their eyes as if at a wild dream,  
Upraised a sudden shout, *El Draque ! El Draque !*  
And flashed their weapons out, but all too late ;  
For, ere their sleeping comrades reached the deck,



The little watch, out-numbered and out-matched,  
Lay bound, and o'er the hatches everywhere  
The points of naked cutlasses on guard  
Gleamed, and without a struggle those below  
Gave up their arms, their poignards jewelled thick  
With rubies, and their blades of Spanish steel.

Then onward o'er the great grey gleaming sea  
They swept with their rich booty, night and day.  
Five other prizes, one for every ship,  
Out of the seas of Spain they suddenly caught  
And carried with them, laughing as they went—  
“Now, now indeed the Rubicon is crossed ;  
Now have we singed the eyelids and the beard  
Of Spain ; now have we roused the hornet's nest ;  
Now shall we sail against a world in arms ;  
Now we have nought between us and black death  
But our own hands, five ships, and three score guns.”  
So laughed they, plunging through the bay of storms,  
Biscay, and past Gibraltar, not yet clothed  
With British thunder, though, as one might dream,  
Gazing in dim prophetic grandeur out  
Across the waves while that small fleet went by,  
Or watching them with love's most wistful fear  
As they plunged Southward to the lonely coasts  
Of Africa, till right in front up-soared,  
Tremendous over ocean, Teneriffe,  
Cloud-robed, but crowned with colours of the dawn.

Already those two traitors were at work,  
Doughty and his false brother, among the crews,  
Who knew not yet the vastness of their quest,  
Nor dreamed of aught beyond the accustomed world ;  
For Drake had kept it secret, and the thoughts  
Of some that he had shipped before the mast  
Set sail scarce farther than for Mogadore  
In West Morocco, or at the utmost mark

For northern Egypt, by the midnight woods  
And crystal palace roofed with chrysoprase  
Where Prester John had reigned five hundred years,  
And Sydon, river of jewels, through the dark  
Enchanted gorges rolled its rays along !  
Some thought of Rio Grande ; but scarce to ten  
The true intent was known ; while to divert  
The rest from care the skilled musicians played.  
But those two Doughtys cunningly devised  
By chance-dropt words to breathe a hint abroad ;  
And through the foc'sles crept a grisly fear  
Of things that lay beyond the bourne of earth,  
Till even those hardy seamen almost quailed ;  
And now, at any moment, they might turn  
With terror in their eyes. They might refuse  
To sail into that fabled burning Void  
Or brave that *primum mobile* which drew  
O'er-daring ships into the jaws of hell  
Beyond the Pole Antarticke, where the sea  
Rushed down through fiery mountains, and no sail  
Could e'er return against its roaring stream.

Now down the coast of Barbary they cruised  
Till Christmas Eve embraced them in the heart  
Of summer. In a bay of mellow calm  
They moored, and as the fragrant twilight brought  
The stars, the sound of song and dance arose ;  
And down the shores in stealthy silence crept,  
Out of the massy forest's emerald gloom,  
The naked, dark-limbed children of the night,  
Unseen, to gaze upon the floating glare  
Of revelry ; unheard, to hear that strange  
New music of the gods, where o'er the soft  
Ripple and wash of the lanthorn-crimsoned tide  
Will Harvest's voice above the chorus rang.

## SONG.

*In Devonshire, now, the Christmas chime  
 Is carolling over the lea ;  
 And the sexton shovels away the snow  
 From the old church porch, maybe ;  
 And the waits with their lanthorns and noses a-glow  
 Come round for their Christmas fee ;  
 But, as in old England it's Christmas-time,  
 Why, so is it here at sea,  
     My lads,  
 Why, so is it here at sea !*

*When the ship comes home, from turret to poop  
 Filled full with Spanish gold,  
 There'll be many a country dance and joke,  
 And many a tale to be told ;  
 Every old woman shall have a red cloak  
 To fend her against the cold ;  
 And every old man shall have a big round stoup  
 Of jolly good ale and old,  
     My lads,  
 Jolly good ale and old !*

But on the morrow came a prosperous wind  
 Whereof they took advantage, and shook out  
 The flashing sails, and held their Christmas feast  
 Upon the swirling ridges of the sea :  
 And, sweeping Southward with full many a rouse  
 And shout of laughter, at the fall of day,  
 While the black prows drove, leapt, and plunged, and  
     ploughed  
 Through the broad dazzle of sunset-coloured tides,  
 Outside the cabin of the *Golden Hynde*,  
 Where Drake and his chief captains dined in state,  
 The skilled musicians made a great new song.

## SONG.

## I.

*Happy by the hearth sit the lasses and the lads, now,  
 Roasting of their chestnuts, toasting of their toes !  
 When the door is opened to a blithe new-comer,  
 Stamping like a ploughman to shuffle off the snows ;  
 Rosy flower-like faces through the soft red firelight  
 Float as if to greet us, far away at sea,  
 Sigh as they remember, and turn the sigh to laughter,  
 Kiss beneath the mistletoe and wonder at their glee.  
     With their " heigh ho, the holly !  
     This life is most jolly !"  
 Christmas-time is kissing-time,  
 Away with melancholy !*

## II.

*Ah, the Yule of England, the happy Yule of England,  
 Yule of berried holly and the merry mistletoe ;  
 The boar's head, the brown ale, the blue snapdragon,  
 Yule of groaning tables and the crimson log aglow !  
 Yule, the golden bugle to the scattered old companions,  
 Ringing as with laughter, shining as through tears !  
 Loved of little children, oh guard the holy Yuletide,  
 Guard it, men of England, for the child beyond the years.  
     With its " heigh ho, the holly !"  
     Away with melancholy !  
 Christmas-time is kissing-time,  
     " This life is most jolly !"*

Now to the Fortunate Islands of old time  
 They came, and found no glory as of old  
 Encircling them, no red ineffable calm  
 Of sunset round crowned faces pale with bliss  
 Like evening stars ; but rugged, waste, and wild

Those isles were when they neared them, though afar  
They beautifully smouldered in the sun  
Like dusky purple jewels fringed and frayed  
With silver foam across that ancient sea  
Of wonder. On the largest of the seven  
Drake landed Doughty with his musketeers  
To exercise their weapons and to seek  
Supplies among the matted uncouth huts  
Which, as the ships drew round each ragged cliff,  
Crept like remembered misery into sight ;  
Oh, like the strange dull waking from a dream  
They blotted out the rosy courts and fair  
Imagined marble thresholds of the King  
Achilles and the heroes that were gone.  
But Drake cared nought for these things. Such a heart  
He had, to make each utmost ancient bourne  
Of man's imagination but a point  
Of new departure for his Golden Dream.  
But Doughty with his men ashore, alone,  
Among the sparse wind-bitten groves of palm,  
Kindled their fears of all they must endure  
On that immense adventure. Nay, sometimes  
He hinted of a voyage far beyond  
All history and fable, far beyond  
Even that Void whence only two returned,—  
Columbus, with his men in mutiny ;  
Magellan, who could only hound his crew  
Onward by threats of death, until they turned  
In horror from the Threat that lay before,  
Preferring to be hanged as mutineers  
Rather than venture farther. Nor indeed  
Did even Magellan at the last return ;  
But, with all hell around him, in the clutch  
Of devils died upon some savage isle  
By poisonous black enchantment. Not in vain  
Were Doughty's words on that volcanic shore  
Among the stunted dark acacia trees,  
Whose heads, all bent one way by the trade-wind,

Pointed North-east by North, South-west by West  
Ambiguous sibyls that with wizened arms  
Mysteriously declared a twofold path,  
Homeward or onward. But aboard the ships,  
Among the hardier seamen, Old Tom Moone,  
With one or two stout comrades, overbore  
All doubts and questionings with blither tales  
Of how they sailed to Darien and heard  
Nightingales in November all night long  
As down a coast like Paradise they cruised  
Through seas of lasting summer, Eden isles,  
Where birds like rainbows, butterflies like gems,  
And flowers like coloured fires o'er fairy creeks  
Floated and flashed beneath the shadowy palms ;  
While ever and anon a bark canoe  
With naked Indian maidens flower-festooned  
Put out from shadowy coves, laden with fruit  
Ambrosial o'er the silken shimmering sea.  
And once a troop of nut-brown maidens came—  
So said Tom Moone, a twinkle in his eye—  
Swimming to meet them through the warm blue waves  
And wantoned through the water, like those nymphs  
Which one green April at the Mermaid Inn  
Should hear Kit Marlowe mightily pourtray,  
Among his boon companions, in a song  
Of Love that swam the sparkling Hellespont  
Upheld by nymphs, not lovelier than these,—  
Though whiter yet not lovelier than these ;  
For those like flowers, but these like rounded fruit  
Rosily ripening through the clear tides tossed  
From nut-brown breast and arm all round the ship  
The thousand-coloured spray. Shapely of limb  
They were ; but as they laid their small brown hands  
Upon the ropes we cast them, Captain Drake  
Suddenly thundered at them and bade them pack  
For a troop of naughty wenches ! At that tale  
A tempest of fierce laughter rolled around  
The foc'sle ; but one boy from London town,

A pale-faced prentice, run-away to sea,  
Asking why Drake had bidden them pack so soon,  
Tom Moone turned to him with his deep-sea growl,  
“Because our Captain is no pink-eyed boy  
Nor soft-limbed Spaniard, but a staunch-souled Man,  
Full-blooded ; nerved like iron ; with a girl  
He loves at home in Devon ; and a mind  
For ever bent upon some mighty goal,  
I know not what—but ’tis enough for me  
To know my Captain knows.” And then he told  
How sometimes o’er the gorgeous forest gloom  
Some marble city, rich, mysterious, white,  
An ancient treasure-house of Aztec kings,  
Or palace of forgotten Incas gleamed ;  
And in their dim rich lofty cellars gold,  
Beyond all wildest dreams, great bars of gold,  
Like pillars, tossed in mighty chaos, gold  
And precious stones, agate and emerald,  
Diamond, sapphire, ruby, and sardonyx.  
So said he, as they waited the return  
Of Doughty, resting in the foc’sle gloom,  
Or idly couched about the sun-swept decks  
On sails or coils of rope, while overhead  
Some boy would climb the rigging and look out,  
Arching his hand to see if Doughty came.  
But when he came, he came with a strange face  
Of feigned despair ; and with a stammering tongue  
He vowed he could not find those poor supplies  
Which Drake himself in other days had found  
Upon that self-same island. But, perchance,  
This was a barren year, he said. And Drake  
Looked at him, suddenly, and at the musketeers.  
Their eyes were strained ; their faces wore a cloud.  
That night he said no more ; but on the morn,  
Mistrusting nothing, Drake with subtle sense  
Of weather-wisdom, through that little fleet  
Distributed his crews anew. And all  
The prisoners and the prizes at those isles

They left behind them, taking what they would  
From out their carven cabins,—glimmering silks,  
Chiselled Toledo blades, and broad doubloons.  
And lo, as they weighed anchor, far away  
Behind them on the blue horizon line  
It seemed a city of towering masts arose ;  
And from the crow's nest of the *Golden Hynde*  
A seaman cried, "By God ; the hunt is up !"   
And like a tide of triumph through their veins  
The red rejoicing blood began to race  
As there they saw the avenging ships of Spain,  
Eight mighty galleons, nosing out their trail.  
And Drake growled, "Oh, my lads of Bideford,  
It cuts my heart to show the hounds our heels ;  
But we must not emperil our great quest !  
Such fights as that must wait—as our reward  
When we return. Yet I will not put on  
One stitch of sail. So, lest they are not too slow  
To catch us, clear the decks. God, I would like  
To fight them !" So the little fleet advanced  
With decks all cleared and shotted guns and men  
Bare-armed beside them, hungering to be caught,  
And quite distracted from their former doubts ;  
For danger, in that kind, they never feared.  
But soon the heavy Spaniards dropped behind ;  
And not in vain had Thomas Doughty sown  
The seeds of doubt ; for many a brow grew black  
With sullen-seeming care that erst was gay.  
But happily and in good time there came,  
Not from behind them now, but right in front,  
On the first sun-down of their quest renewed,  
Just as the sea grew dark around their ships,  
A chance that loosed heart-gnawing doubt in deeds.  
For through a mighty zone of golden haze  
Blotting the purple of the gathering night  
A galleon like a floating mountain moved  
To meet them, clad with sunset and with dreams.  
Her masts and spars immense in jewelled mist



Shimmered : her rigging, like an emerald web  
Of golden spiders, tangled half the stars !  
Embodied sunset, dragging the soft sky  
O'er dazzled ocean, through the night she drew  
Out of the unknown lands ; and round a prow  
That jutted like a moving promontory  
Over a cloven wilderness of foam,  
Upon a lofty blazoned scroll her name  
*San Salvador* challenged obsequious isles  
Where'er she rode ; who kneeling like dark slaves  
Before some great Sultàn must lavish forth  
From golden cornucopias, East and West,  
Red streams of rubies, cataracts of pearl.  
But, at a signal from their admiral, all  
Those five small ships lay silent in the gloom  
Which, just as if some god were on their side,  
Covered them in the dark troughs of the waves,  
Letting her pass to leeward. On she came,  
Blazing with lights, a City of the Sea,  
Belted with crowding towers and clouds of sail,  
And round her bows a long-drawn thunder rolled  
Splendid with foam ; but ere she passed them by  
Drake gave the word, and with one crimson flash  
Two hundred yards of black and hidden sea  
Leaped into sight between them as the roar  
Of twenty British cannon shattered the night.  
Then after her they drove, like black sea-wolves  
Behind some royal high-branched stag of ten,  
Hanging upon those bleeding foam-flecked flanks,  
Leaping, snarling, worrying, as they went  
In full flight down the wind ; for those light ships  
Much speedier than their huge antagonist,  
Keeping to windward, worked their will with her.  
In vain she burnt wild lights and strove to scan  
The darkening deep. Her musketeers in vain  
Provoked the crackling night with random fires :  
In vain her broadside bellowings burst at large  
As if the Gates of Erebus unrolled.

For ever and anon the deep-sea gloom  
From some new quarter, like a dragon's mouth  
Opened and belched forth crimson flames and tore  
Her sides as if with iron claws unseen ;  
Till, all at once, rough voices close at hand  
Out of the darkness thundered, " Grapple her ! "  
And, falling on their knees, the Spaniards knew  
The Dragon of that red Apocalypse.  
There with one awful cry, *El Draque ! El Draque !*  
They cast their weapons from them ; for the moon  
Rose, eastward, and against her rising black  
Over the bloody bulwarks Francis Drake,  
Grasping the great hilt of his naked sword,  
Towered for a moment to their startled eyes  
Through all the zenith like the King of Hell.  
Then he leaped down upon their shining decks,  
And after him swarmed and towered and leapt in haste  
A brawny band of three score Englishmen,  
Gigantic as they loomed against the sky  
And risen, it seemed, by miracle from the sea.  
So small were those five ships below the walls  
Of that huge floating mountain. Royally  
Drake, from the swart commander's trembling hands  
Took the surrendered sword, and bade his men  
Gather the fallen weapons on an heap,  
And placed a guard about them, while the moon  
Silvering the rolling seas for many a mile  
Glanced on the huddled Spaniards' rich attire,  
As like one picture of despair they grouped  
Under the splintered main-mast's creaking shrouds,  
And the great swinging shadows of the sails  
Mysteriously swept the gleaming decks ;  
Where many a butt of useless cannon gloomed  
Along the accoutred bulwarks or upturned,  
As the ship wallowed in the heaving deep,  
Dumb mouths of empty menace to the stars.

Then Drake appointed Doughty, with a guard,

To sail the prize on to the next dim isle  
Where they might leave her, taking aught they would  
From out her carven cabins and rich holds.  
And Doughty's heart leaped in him as he thought,  
"I have my chance at last"; but Drake, who still  
Trusted the man, made surety doubly sure,  
And in his wary weather-wisdom sent  
—Even as a breathing type of friendship, sent—  
His brother, Thomas Drake, aboard the prize;  
But set his brother, his own flesh and blood,  
Beneath the man, as if to say, "I give  
My loyal friend dominion over me."  
So courteously he dealt with him; but he,  
Seeing his chance once more slipping away,  
Raged inwardly and, from his own false heart  
Imputing his own evil, he contrived  
A cunning charge that night; and when they came  
Next day, at noon, upon the destined isle,  
He suddenly spat the secret venom forth,  
With such fierce wrath in his defeated soul  
That he himself almost believed the charge.  
For when Drake stepped on the *San Salvador*  
To order all things duly about the prize,  
What booty they must keep and what let go,  
Doughty received him with a blustering voice  
Of red mock-righteous wrath, "Is this the way  
Englishmen play the pirate, Francis Drake?  
While thou wast dreaming of thy hero's crown—  
God save the mark!—thy brother, nay, thy spy,  
Must play the common pilferer, must convert  
The cargo to his uses, rob us all  
Of what we risked our necks to win: he wears  
The ransom of an emperor round his throat  
That might enrich us all. Who saw him wear  
That chain of rubies ere last night?"

And Drake,  
"Answer him, brother;" and his brother smiled  
And answered, "Nay, I never wore this chain

Before last night ; but Doughty knows, indeed,  
For he was with me—and none else was there  
But Doughty—'tis my word against his word,  
That close on midnight we were summoned down  
To an English seaman who lay dying below  
Unknown to any of us, a prisoner  
In chains, that had been captured none knew where,  
For all his mind was far from Darien,  
And wandering evermore through Devon lanes  
At home ; whom we released ; and from his waist  
He took this hidden chain and gave it me,  
Begging me that if ever I returned  
To Bideford in Devon I would go  
With whatsoever wealth it might produce  
To his old mother who, with wrinkled hands  
In some small white-washed cottage o'er the sea,  
Where wall-flowers bloom in April, even now  
Is turning pages of the well-worn Book  
And praying for her son's return, nor knows  
That he lies cold upon the heaving main.  
But this he asked ; and this in all good faith  
I swore to do ; and even now he died,  
And hurrying hither from his side I clasped  
His chain of rubies round my neck awhile,  
In full sight of the sun. I have no more  
To say." Then up spoke Hatton's trumpeter :  
"But I have more to say. Last night I saw  
Doughty, but not in full sight of the sun,  
Nor once, nor twice, but three times at the least,  
Carrying chains of gold, clusters of gems,  
And whatsoever wealth he could convey  
Into his cabin and smuggle in smallest space."  
"Nay," Doughty stammered, mixing sneer and lie,  
Yet bolstering up his courage with the thought  
That being what courtiers called a gentleman  
He ranked above the rude sea-discipline,  
"Nay, they were free gifts from the Spanish crew  
Because I treated them with courtesy."

Then bluff Will Harvest, "That perchance were true,  
For he hath been close closeted for hours  
With their chief officers, drinking their health  
In our own war-bought wine, while down below  
Their captured English seaman groaned his last."  
Then Drake, whose utter silence, with a sense  
Of infinite power and justice, ruled their hearts,  
Suddenly thundered—and the traitor blanched  
And quailed before him. "This my flesh and blood  
I placed beneath thee as my dearer self!  
But thou, in trampling on him, shalt not say  
I charge thy brother. Nay, thou chargest me!  
Against me only hast thou stirred this strife;  
And now, by God, shalt thou learn, once for all,  
That I, thy captain for this voyage, hold  
The supreme power of judgment in my hands.  
Get thee aboard my flagship! When I come  
I shall have more to say to thee; but thou,  
My brother, take this galleon in thy charge;  
For, as I see, she holdeth all the stores  
Which Doughty failed to find. She shall return  
With us to that New World from which she came.  
But now let these our prisoners all embark  
In yonder pinnace; let them all go free.  
I care not to be cumbered on my way  
Through dead Magellan's unattempted dream  
With chains and prisoners. In that Golden World  
Which means much more to me than I can speak,  
Much more, much more than I can speak or breathe,  
Being, behind whatever name it bears—  
Earthly Paradise, Island of the Saints,  
Cathay, or Zipangu, or Hy Brasil—  
The eternal symbol of my soul's desire,  
A sacred country shining on the sea,  
That Vision without which, the wise king said,  
A people perishes; in that place of hope,  
That Tir'n'an Og, that land of lasting youth,  
Where whosoever sails with me shall drink

Fountains of immortality and dwell  
Beyond the fear of death for evermore,  
There shall we see the dust of battle dance  
Everywhere in the sunbeam of God's peace!  
Oh, in the new Atlantis of my soul  
There are no captives: there the wind blows free;  
And, as in sleep, I have heard the marching song  
Of mighty peoples rising in the West,  
Wonderful cities that shall set their foot  
Upon the throat of all old tyrannies;  
And on the West wind I have heard a cry,  
The shoreless cry of the prophetic sea  
Heralding through that golden wilderness  
The Soul whose path our task is to make straight,  
Freedom, the last great Saviour of mankind.  
I know not what I know: these are wild words,  
Which as the sun draws out earth's morning mists  
Over dim fields where careless cattle sleep,  
Some visionary Light, unknown, afar,  
Draws from my darkling soul. Why should we drag  
Thither this Old-World weight of utter gloom,  
Or with the ballast of these heavy hearts  
Make sail in sorrow for Pacific Seas?  
Let us leave chains and prisoners to Spain;  
But set these free to make their own way home!"  
So said he, groping blindly towards the truth,  
And heavy with the treason of his friend.  
His face was like a king's face as he spake,  
For sorrows that strike deep reveal the deep;  
And through the gateways of a ragged wound  
Sometimes a god will drive his chariot wheels  
From some deep heaven within the hearts of men.  
Nevertheless, the immediate seamen there  
Knowing how great a ransom they might ask  
For some among their prisoners, men of wealth  
And high degree, scarce liked to free them thus;  
And only saw in Drake's conflicting moods  
The moment's whim. "For little will he care,"

They muttered, "when we reach those fabled shores,  
Whether his cannon break their golden peace."  
Yet to his face they murmured not at all ;  
Because his eyes compelled them like a law.  
So there they freed the prisoners and set sail  
Across the earth-shaking shoulders of the broad  
Atlantic, and the great grey slumbrous waves  
Triumphantly swelled up to meet the keels.

## BOOK III.

Now in the cabin of the *Golden Hynde*  
At dusk, Drake sent for Doughty. From one wall  
The picture of his love looked down on him ;  
And on the table lay the magic chart,  
Drawn on a buffalo horn, all small peaked isles,  
Dwarf promontories, tiny twisted creeks,  
And fairy harbours under elfin hills,  
With marvellous inscriptions lined in red,—  
As *Here is Gold*, or *Many Rubies Here*,  
Or *Ware Witch-crafte*, or *Here is Cannibals*.  
For in his great simplicity the man  
Delighted in it, with the adventurous heart  
Of boyhood poring o'er some well-thumbed tale  
On blue *Twelfth Night* beside the crimson fire ;  
And o'er him, like a vision of a boy  
In his first knighthood when, upon some hill  
Washed by the silver fringes of the sea,  
Amidst the purple heather he lies and reads  
Of Arthur and Avilion, like a star  
His love's pure face looked down. There Doughty came,  
Half fearful, half defiant, with a crowd  
Of jostling half-excuses on his lips,  
And one dark swarm of adders in his heart.  
For now what light of chivalry remained  
In Doughty's mind was thickening with a plot,  
Subtler and deadlier than the serpent's first  
Attempt on our first sire in Eden bower.  
Drake, with a countenance open as the sun,



Received him, saying : "Forgive me, friend, for I  
Was hasty with thee. I wellnigh forgot  
Those large and liberal nights we two have passed  
In this old cabin, telling all our dreams  
And hopes, in friendship, o'er and o'er again.  
But Vicary, thy lawyer friend, hath been  
Pleading with me ; and now I understand  
All ; so forgive,—for thou art hasty too,  
And hast said things in passion which, 'fore God,  
I would not take from other men alive.  
But now—I understand. Thou shalt no more  
Be vexed with a divided mastership.  
Indeed, I trust thee, Doughty ; against all  
Appearances I trust thee. Wilt thou not  
Be friends with me ? For now in ample proof  
Thou shalt take charge of this my *Golden Hynde*  
In all things, save of seamanship, which rests  
With the ship's master under my command.  
But I myself will sail upon the prize."  
And with the word he gathered up the chart,  
Took down his lady's picture with a smile,  
Gripped Doughty's hand and left him, staring, sheer  
Bewildered with that magnanimity  
Of faith, throughout all shadows, in some light  
Unseen behind the shadows. Thus did Drake  
Give up his own fair cabin which he loved ;  
Being, it seemed, a little travelling home,  
Fragrant with memories,—gave it, as he thought,  
In recompense to one whom he had wronged.  
For even as his mind must ever yearn  
To shores beyond the sunset, even so  
He yearned through all dark shadows to his friend,  
And with his greater nature striving still  
To comprehend the lesser, as the sky  
Embraces our low earth, he would adduce  
Justifications, thus : "These men of law  
Are trained to plead for any and every cause,  
To feign an indignation, or to prove

The worse is better and that black is white !  
 Small wonder that their passion goes astray :  
 There is one prayer, one prayer for all of us—  
*Enter not into judgment with Thy servant !*"

Yet as his boat pulled tow'rd the Spanish prize  
 Leaving the *Golden Hynde*, far off he heard  
 A voice that chilled him, as the voice of Fate  
 Crying like some old Bellman through the world.

### SONG.

*Yes ; oh, yes ; if any seek  
 Laughter flown or lost delight,  
 Glancing eye or rosy cheek,  
 Love shall claim his own to-night !  
 Say, hath any lost a friend ?  
 Yes ; oh, yes !  
 Let his distress  
 In my ditty find its end.*

*Yes ; oh, yes ; here all is found !  
 Kingly palaces await  
 Each its rightful owner, crowned  
 King and consecrate,  
 Under the wet and wintry ground !  
 Yes ; oh, yes !  
 There sure redress  
 Lies where all is lost and found.*

And Doughty, though Drake's deed of kindness flashed  
 A moment's kind contrition through his heart,  
 Immediately, with all his lawyer's wit  
 True to the cause that hired him, laughed it by,  
 And straight began to weave the treacherous web  
 Of soft intrigue wherein he meant to snare

The passions of his comrades. Night and day,  
As that small fleet drove onward o'er the deep,  
Cleaving the sunset with their bright black prows  
Or hunted by the red pursuing Dawn,  
He stirred between the high-born gentlemen  
(Whose white and jewelled hands, gallant in fight,  
And hearts remembering Crecy and Poitiers,  
Were of scant use in common seamanship),  
Between these and the men whose rough tarred arms  
Were good at equal need in storm or war  
Yet took a poorer portion of the prize,  
He stirred a subtle jealousy and fanned  
A fire that swiftly grew almost to hate.  
For when the seamen must take precedence  
Of loiterers on the deck—through half a word,  
Small, with intense device, like some fierce lens,  
He magnified their rude and blustering mode ;  
Or urged some scented fop, whose idle brain  
Busied itself with momentary whims,  
To bid the master alter here a sail,  
Or there a rope ; and, if the man refused,  
Doughty, at night, across the wine-cups, raved  
Against the rising insolence of the mob ;  
And hinted Drake himself was half to blame,  
In words that seemed to say, "I am his friend,  
Or I should bid you think him all to blame."  
So fierce indeed the strife became that once,  
While Chester, Doughty's catspaw, played with fire,  
The grim ship-master growled between his teeth,  
"Remember, sir, remember, ere too late,  
Magellan's mutinous vice-admiral's end."  
And Doughty heard, and with a boisterous laugh  
Slapped the old sea-dog on the back and said,  
"The gallows are for dogs, not gentlemen !"  
Meanwhile his brother, sly John Doughty, sought  
To fan the seamen's fear of the unknown world  
With whispers and conjectures ; and, at night,  
He brought old books of Greek and Hebrew down

Into the foc'sle, claiming by their aid  
 A knowledge of Black Art, and power to tell  
 The future, which he dreadfully displayed  
 There in the flickering light of the oily lamp,  
 Bending above their huge and swarthy palms  
 And tracing them to many a grisly doom.

So many a night and day westward they plunged.  
 The half-moon ripened to its mellow round,  
 Dwindled again and ripened yet again.  
 And there was nought around them but the grey  
 Ruin and roar of huge Atlantic seas.  
 And only like a memory of the world  
 They left behind them rose the same great sun,  
 And daily rolled his chariot through their sky,  
 Whereof the skilled musicians made a song.

#### SONG.

The same sun is o'er us,  
 The same Love shall find us,  
 The same and none other,  
 Wherever we be ;  
 With the same goal before us,  
 The same home behind us,  
 England, our mother,  
 Ringed round with the sea.

When the breakers charged thundering  
 In thousands all round us  
 With a lightning of lances  
 Uphurtled on high,  
 When the stout ships were sundering  
 A rapture hath crowned us,  
 Like the wild light that dances  
 On the crests that flash by.

When the waters lay breathless  
Gazing at Hesper  
Guarding the golden  
Fruit of the tree,  
Heard we the deathless  
Wonderful whisper  
Wafting the olden  
Dream of the sea.

No land in the ring of it  
Now, all around us  
Only the splendid  
Resurging unknown!  
How should we sing of it?—  
This that hath found us  
By the great sun attended  
In splendour, alone.

Ah! the broad miles of it,  
White with the onset  
Of waves without number  
Warring for glee.  
Ah! the soft smiles of it  
Down to the sunset,  
Holy for slumber,  
The peace of the sea.

The wave's heart, exalted,  
Leaps forward to meet us,  
The sun on the sea-wave  
Lies white as the moon:  
The soft sapphire-vaulted  
Deep heaven smiles to greet us,  
Free sons of the free-wave  
All singing one tune.

*The same sun is o'er us,  
The same Love shall find us,  
The same and none other,  
Wherever we be ;  
With the same goal before us,  
The same home behind us,  
England, our mother,  
Queen of the sea.*

At last a faint-flushed April Dawn arose  
With milk-white arms up-binding golden clouds  
Of fragrant hair behind her lovely head ;  
And lo, before the bright black plunging prows  
The whole sea suddenly shattered into shoals  
Of rolling porpoises. Everywhere they tore  
The glittering water. Like a moving crowd  
Of black bright rocks washed smooth by foaming tides,  
They thrilled the unconscious fancy of the crews  
With subtle, wild, and living hints of land.  
And soon Columbus' happy signals came,  
The signs that saved him when his mutineers  
Despaired at last and clamoured to return,—  
And there, with awe triumphant in their eyes,  
They saw, lazily tossing on the tide,  
A drift of seaweed and a berried branch,  
Which silenced them as if they had seen a Hand  
Writing with fiery letters on the deep.  
Then a black cormorant, vulture of the sea,  
With neck outstretched and one long ominous *honk*,  
Went hurtling past them to its unknown bourne.  
A mighty white-winged albatross came next ;  
Then flight on flight of clamorous clanging gulls ;  
And last, a wild and sudden shout of "Land !"   
Echoed from crew to crew across the waves.  
Then, dumb upon the rigging as they hung  
Staring at it, a menace chilled their blood.  
For like *Il Gran Nemico* of Dante, dark,  
Ay, coloured like a thunder-cloud, from North

To South, in front, there slowly rose to sight  
A country like a dragon fast asleep  
Along the West, with wrinkled, purple wings  
Ending in ragged forests o'er its spine ;  
And with great craggy claws out-thrust, that turned  
(As the dim distances dissolved their veils)  
To promontories bounding a huge bay.  
There o'er the hushed and ever shallower tide  
The staring ships drew nigh and thought, " Is this  
The Dragon of our Golden Apple Tree,  
The guardian of the fruit of our desire  
Which grows in gardens of the Hesperides  
Where those three sisters weave a white-armed dance  
Around it everlastingly, and sing  
Strange songs in a strange tongue that still convey  
Warning to heedful souls ? " Nearer they drew,  
And now, indeed, from out a soft blue-grey  
Mingling of colours on that coast's deep flank  
There crept a garden of enchantment, height  
O'er height, a garden sloping from the hills,  
Wooded as with Aladdin's trees that bore  
All-coloured clustering gems instead of fruit ;  
Now vaster as it grew upon their eyes,  
And like some Roman amphitheatre  
Cirque above mighty cirque all round the bay,  
With jewels and flowers ablaze on women's breasts  
Innumerable confounded and confused ;  
While lovely faces flushed with lust of blood,  
Rank above rank upon their tawny thrones  
In soft barbaric splendour lapped, and lulled  
By the low thunderings of a thousand lions,  
Luxuriously smiled as they bent down  
Over the scarlet-splashed and steaming sands  
To watch the white-limbed gladiators die.

Such fears and dreams for Francis Drake, at least,  
Rose and dissolved in his nigh fevered brain  
As they drew near that equatorial shore ;

For rumours had been borne to him ; and now  
He knew not whether to impute the wrong  
To his untrustful mind or to believe  
Doughty a traitorous liar ; for the sense  
Of his own friendship towards him made it hard  
To understand that treachery ; yet there seemed  
Proof and to spare. A thousand shadows rose  
To mock him with their veiled indicative hands.  
And each alone he laid and exorcised  
With ease ; but ah, not all, not all at once.  
And for each doubt he banished, one returned  
From darker depths to mock him o'er again.

So, in that bay, the little fleet sank sail  
And anchored ; and the wild reality  
Behind those dreams towered round them on the hills,  
Or so it seemed. And Drake bade lower a boat,  
And went ashore with sixteen men to seek  
Water ; and, as they neared the embowered beach,  
Over the green translucent tide there came,  
A hundred yards from land, a drowsy sound  
Immeasurably repeated and prolonged,  
As of innumerable elfin drums  
Dreamily mustering in the tropic bloom.  
This from without they heard, across the waves ;  
But when they glided into a flowery creek  
Under the sharp black shadows of the trees—  
Jaca and Mango and Palm and red festoons  
Of garlanded Liana wreaths—it ebbed  
Into the murmur of the mighty fronds,  
Prodigious leaves whose veinings bore the fresh  
Impression of the finger-prints of God.  
There humming-birds, like flake of purple fire  
Upon some passing seraph's plumage, beat  
And quivered in blinding blots of golden light  
Between the embattled cactus and cardoon ;  
While one huge whisper of primeval awe



Seemed to await the cool green eventide  
When God should walk His Garden as of old.

Now as the boats were plying to and fro  
Between the ships and that enchanted shore,  
Drake bade his comrades tarry a little and went  
Apart, alone, into the trackless woods.  
Tormented with his thoughts, he saw all round  
Once more the battling image of his mind,  
Where there was nought of man, only the vast  
Unending silent struggle of Titan trees,  
Large internecine twistings of the world,  
The hushed death-grapple and the still intense  
Locked anguish of Laocoons that gripped  
Death by the throat for thrice three hundred years.  
Once, like a subtle mockery overhead,  
Some black-armed chattering ape swung swiftly by,  
But he strode onward, thinking—"Was it false,  
False all that kind outreaching of the hands?  
False? Was there nothing certain, nothing sure  
In those divinest aisles and towers of Time  
Wherein we took sweet counsel? Is there nought  
Sure but the solid dust beneath our feet?  
Must all those lovelier fabrics of the soul,  
Being so divinely bright and delicate,  
Waver and shine no longer than some poor  
Prismatic aery bubble? Ay, they burst,  
And all their glory shrinks into one tear  
No bitterer than some idle love-lorn maid  
Sheds for her dead canary. God, it hurts,  
This, this hurts most, to think how we must miss  
What might have been, for nothing but a breath,  
A babbling of the tongue, an argument,  
Or such a poor contention as involves  
The thrones and dominations of this earth,—  
How many of us, like seed on barren ground,  
Must miss the flower and harvest of their prayers,

The living light of friendship and the grasp  
Which for its very meaning once implied  
Eternities of utterance and the life  
Immortal of two souls beyond the grave?"

Now, wandering upward ever, he reached and clomb  
The slope side of a fern-fringed precipice,  
And, at the summit, found an open glade,  
Whence, looking o'er the forest, he beheld  
The sea; and, in the land-locked bay below,  
Far, far below, his elfin-tiny ships,  
All six at anchor on the crawling tide!  
Then onward, upward, through the woods once more  
He plunged with bursting heart and burning brow;  
And, once again, like madness, the black shapes  
Of doubt swung through his brain and chattered and  
laughed,

Till he upstretched his arms in agony  
And cursed the name of Doughty, cursed the day  
They met, cursed his false face and courtier smiles,  
"For oh," he cried, "how easy a thing it were  
For truth to wear the garb of truth! This proves  
His treachery!" And there, at once, his thoughts  
Tore him another way, as thus, "And yet  
If he were false, is he not subtle enough  
To hide it? Why, this proves his innocence—  
This very courtly carelessness which I,  
Black-hearted evil-thinker as I am,  
In my own clumsier spirit so misjudge!  
These children of the court are butterflies  
Fluttering hither and thither, and I—poor fool—  
Would fix them to a stem and call them flowers,  
Nay, bid them grasp the ground like towering oaks  
And shadow all the zenith;" and yet again  
The madness of distrustful friendship gleamed  
From his fierce eyes, "Oh villain, damnèd villain,  
God's murrain on his heart! I know full well  
He hides what he can hide! He wears no fault

Upon the gloss and frippery of his breast !  
It is not that ! It is the hidden things,  
Unseizable, the things I do not know,  
Ay, it is these, these, these and these alone  
That I mistrust."

And, as he walked, the skies  
Grew full of threats, and now enormous clouds  
Rose mammoth-like above the ensanguined deep,  
Trampling the daylight out ; and, with its death  
Dyed purple, rushed along as if they meant  
To obliterate the world. He took no heed.  
Though that strange blackness brimmed the branching aisles  
With horror, he strode on till in the gloom,  
Just as his winding way came out once more  
Over a precipice that o'erlooked the bay,  
There, as he went, not gazing down, but up,  
He saw what seemed a ponderous granite cliff,  
A huge ribbed shell upon a lonely shore  
Left by forgotten mountains when they sank  
Back to earth's breast like billows on a sea.  
A tall and whispering crowd of tree-ferns waved  
Mysterious fringes round it. In their midst  
He flung himself at its broad base, with one  
Sharp shivering cry of pain, "Show me Thy ways,  
O God, teach me Thy paths ! I am in the dark !  
Lighten my darkness !"

Almost as he spoke  
There swept across the forest, far and wide,  
Gathering power and volume as it came,  
A sound as of a rushing mighty wind ;  
And, overhead, like great black goutts of blood  
Wrung from the awful forehead of the Night  
The first drops fell and ceased. Then, suddenly,  
Out of the darkness, earth with all her seas,  
Her little ships at anchor in the bay  
(Five ebony ships upon a sheet of silver,  
Drake saw not that, indeed, Drake saw not that !),  
Her woods, her boughs, her leaves, her tiniest twigs.

Leapt like a hunted stag through one immense  
Lightning of revelation into the murk  
Of Erebus : then heaven o'er rending heaven  
Shattered and crashed down ruin over the world.  
But, in that deeper darkness, Francis Drake  
Stood upright now, and with blind outstretched arms  
Groped at that strange forgotten cliff and shell  
Of mystery ; for in that flash of light  
Æons had passed ; and now the Thing in front  
Made his blood freeze with memories that lay  
Behind his Memory. In the gloom he groped,  
And with dark hands that knew not what they knew,  
As one that shelters in the night, unknowing,  
Beneath a stranded shipwreck, with a cry  
He touched the enormous rain-washed belted ribs  
And bones like battlements of some Mastodon  
Embedded there until the trump of doom.

After long years, long centuries, perchance,  
Triumphantly some other pioneer  
Would stand where Drake now stood and read the tale  
Of ages where he only felt the cold  
Touch in the dark of some huge mystery ;  
Yet Drake might still be nearer to the light  
Who now was whispering from his great deep heart,  
"Show me Thy ways, O God, teach me Thy paths !"  
And there by some strange instinct, oh, he felt  
God's answer there, as if he grasped a hand  
Across a gulf of twice ten thousand years ;  
And he regained his lost magnificence  
Of faith in that great Harmony which resolves  
Our discords, faith through all the ruthless laws  
Of nature in their lovely pitilessness,  
Faith in that Love which outwardly must wear,  
Through all the sorrows of eternal change,  
The splendour of the indifference of God.

All round him through the heavy purple gloom

Sloped the soft rush of silver-arrowed rain,  
 Loosening the skies' hard anguish as with tears.  
 Once more he felt his unity with all  
 The vast composure of the universe,  
 And drank deep at the fountains of that peace  
 Which comprehends the tumult of our days.  
 But with that peace the power to act returned ;  
 And, with his back against the Mastodon,  
 He stared through the great darkness tow'rs the sea.  
 The rain ceased for a moment : only the slow  
 Drip of the dim droop-feathered palms all round  
 Deepened the hush.

Then, out of the gloom once more  
 The whole earth leapt to sight with all her woods,  
 Her boughs, her leaves, her tiniest twigs distinct  
 For one wild moment ; but Drake only saw  
 The white flash of her seas and there, oh there  
 That land-locked bay with those five elfin ships,  
 Five elfin ebony ships upon a sheet  
 Of wrinkled silver ! Then, as the thunder followed,  
 One thought burst through his brain—

*Where was the sixth ?*

Over the grim precipitous edge he hung,  
 An eagle waiting for the lightning now  
 To swoop upon his prey. One iron hand  
 Gripped a rough tree-root like a bunch of snakes ;  
 And, as the rain rushed round him, far away  
 He saw to northward yet another flash,  
 A scribble of God's finger in the sky  
 Over a waste of white stampeding waves.  
 His eye flashed like a falchion as he saw it,  
 And from his lips there burst the sea-king's laugh ;  
 For there, with a fierce joy he knew, he knew  
 Doughty, at last—an open mutineer !  
 An open foe to fight ! Ay, there she went,—  
 His *Golden Hynde*, his little *Golden Hynde*  
 A wild deserter scudding to the North.  
 And, almost ere the lightning, Drake had gone

Crashing down the face of the precipice,  
By a narrow water-gully, and through the huge  
Forest he tore the straight and perilous way  
Down to the shore ; while, three miles to the North,  
Upon the wet poop of the *Golden Hynde*  
Doughty stood smiling. Scarce would he have smiled  
Knowing that Drake had seen him from that tower  
Amidst the thunders ; but, indeed, he thought  
He had escaped unseen amidst the storm.  
Many a day he had worked upon the crew,  
Fanning their fears and doubts until he won  
The more part to his side. And when they reached  
That coast, he showed them how Drake meant to sail  
Southward, into the unknown Void ; but he  
Would have them suddenly slip by stealth away  
Northward to Darien, showing them what a life  
Of golden glory waited for them there,  
If, laying aside this empty quest, they joined  
The merry feasters round those island fires  
Which over many a dark-blue creek illumed  
Buccaneer camps in scarlet logwood groves,  
Fringing the Gulf of Mexico, till dawn  
Summoned the Black Flags out to sweep the sea.

But when Drake reached the flower-embowered boat  
And found the men awaiting his return  
There, in a sheltering grove of bread-fruit trees  
Beneath great eaves of leafage that obscured  
Their sight, but kept the storm out, as they tossed  
Pieces of eight or rattled the bone dice,  
His voice went through them like a thunderbolt,  
For none of them had seen the *Golden Hynde*  
Steal from the bay ; and now the billows burst  
Like cannon down the coast ; and they had thought  
Their boat could not be launched until the storm  
Abated. Under Drake's compelling eyes,  
Nevertheless, they poled her down the creek  
Without one word, waiting their chance. Then all

Together with their brandished oars they thrust,  
 And on the fierce white out-draught of a wave  
 They shot up, up and over the toppling crest  
 Of the next, and plunged crashing into the vale  
 Behind it : then they settled at their thwarts,  
 And the fierce water boiled before their blades  
 As, with Drake's iron hand upon the helm,  
 They soared and crashed across the rolling seas.

Not for the Spanish prize did Drake now steer,  
 But for that little ship the *Marygold*,  
 Swiftest of sail, next to the *Golden Hynde*,  
 And, in the hands of Francis Drake, indeed  
 Swiftest of all ; and ere the seamen knew  
 What power, as of a wind, bore them along,  
 Anchor was up, their hands were on the sheets,  
 The sails were broken out, the *Marygold*  
 Was flying like a storm-cloud to the North,  
 And on her poop an iron statue still  
 As death stood Francis Drake.

One hour they rushed  
 Northward, with green seas washing o'er the deck  
 And buffeted with splendour ; then they saw  
 The *Golden Hynde* like some wing-broken gull  
 With torn mismanaged plumes beating the air  
 In peril of utter shipwreck ; saw her fly  
 Half-mast, a feeble signal of distress  
 Despite all Doughty's curses ; for her crew  
 With wild divisions torn amongst themselves  
 Most gladly now surrendered in their hearts,  
 As close alongside grandly onward swept  
 The *Marygold*, with canvas trim and taut  
 Magnificently drawing the full wind,  
 Her gunners waiting at their loaded guns  
 Bare-armed and silent ; and that iron soui  
 Alone, upon her silent quarter-deck.  
 There they hauled up into the wind and lay  
 Rocking, while Drake, alone, without a guard,

Boarding the runaway, dismissed his boat  
Back to the *Marygold*. Then his voice out-rang  
Trumpet-like o'er the trembling mutineers,  
And clearly, as if they were but busied still  
About the day's routine. They hid their shame,  
As men that would propitiate a god,  
By flying to fulfil his lightest word ;  
And ere they knew what power, as of a wind  
Impelled them—that half wreck was trim and taut,  
Her sails all drawing and her bows afoam ;  
And, creeping past the *Marygold* once more,  
She led their Southward way ! And not till then  
Did Drake vouchsafe one word to the white face  
Of Doughty, as he furtively slunk nigh  
With some new lie upon his fear-parched lips  
Thirsting for utterance in his crackling laugh  
Of deprecation ; and with one ruffling puff  
Of pigeon courage in his blinded soul—  
“I am no sea-dog—even Francis Drake  
Would scarce misuse a gentleman. Thank God  
I am a gentleman !” And there Drake turned  
And summoned four swart seamen out by name.  
His words went like a cold wind through their flesh  
As with a passionless voice he slowly said,  
“Take ye this fellow : bind him to the mast  
Until what time I shall decide his fate.”  
And Doughty gasped as at the world's blank end,—  
“Nay, Francis,” cried he, “wilt thou thus misuse  
A gentleman ?” But as the seamen gripped  
His arms he struggled vainly and furiously  
To throw them off ; and in his impotence  
Let slip the whole of his treacherous cause and hope  
In empty wrath,—“Fore God,” he foamed and snarled  
“Ye shall all smart for this when we return !  
Unhand me, dogs ! I have Lord Burleigh's power  
Behind me. There is nothing I have done  
Without his warrant ! Ye shall smart for this !  
Unhand me, I say, unhand me !”



And in one flash  
Drake saw the truth, and Doughty saw his eyes  
Lighten upon him ; and his false heart quailed  
Once more ; and he suddenly suffered himself  
Quietly, strangely, to be led away  
And bound without a murmur to the mast.  
And strangely Drake remembered, as those words,  
“Ye shall all smart for this when we return,”  
Yelped at his faith, how while the Dover cliffs  
Faded from sight he leaned to his new friend  
Doughty and said : “I blame them not who stay !  
I blame them not at all who cling to home,  
For many of us, indeed, shall not return,  
Nor ever know that sweetness any more.”

And when they had reached their anchorage anew,  
Drake, having now resolved to bring his fleet  
Beneath a more compact control, at once  
Took all the men and the chief guns and stores  
From out the Spanish prize ; and sent Tom Moone  
To set the hulk afire. Also he bade  
Unbind the traitor and ordered him aboard  
The pinnacle *Christopher*. John Doughty, too,  
He ordered thither, into the grim charge  
Of old Tom Moone, thinking it best to keep  
The poisonous leaven carefully apart  
Until they had won well Southward, to a place  
Where, finally committed to their quest,  
They might arraign the traitor without fear  
Or favour, and acquit him or condemn.  
But those two brothers, doubting as the false  
Are damned to doubt, saw murder in his eyes,  
And thought “He means to sink the smack one night.”  
And they refused to go, till Drake abruptly  
Ordered them straightway to be slung on board  
With ropes.

The daylight waned ; but ere the sun  
Sank, the five ships were plunging to the South ;

For Drake would halt no longer, lest the crews  
Also should halt betwixt two purposes.  
He took the tide of fortune at the flood ;  
And onward through the now subsiding storm,  
Ere they could think what power as of a wind  
Impelled them, he had swept them on their way.  
Far, far into the night they saw the blaze  
That leapt in crimson o'er the abandoned hulk  
Behind them, like a mighty hecatomb  
Marking the path of some Titanic will.  
Many a night and day they Southward drove.  
Sometimes at midnight round them all the sea  
Quivered with witches' oils and water snakes,  
Green, blue, and red, with lambent tongues of fire.  
Mile upon mile about the blurred black hulls  
A cauldron of tempestuous colour coiled.  
On every mast mysterious meteors burned,  
And from the shores a bellowing rose and fell  
As of great bestial gods that walked all night  
Through some wild hell unknown, too vast for men ;  
But when the silver and crimson of the dawn  
Broke out, they saw the tropic shores anew,  
The fair white foam, and, round about the rocks,  
Weird troops of tusked sea-lions ; and the world  
Mixed with their dreams and made them stranger still.  
And, once, so fierce a tempest scattered the fleet  
That even the hardiest souls began to think  
There was a Jonah with them ; for the seas  
Rose round them like green mountains, peaked and ridged  
With heights of Alpine snow amongst the clouds ;  
And many a league to Southward, when the ships  
Gathered again amidst the sinking waves  
Four only met. The ship of Thomas Drake  
Was missing ; and some thought it had gone down  
With all hands in the storm. But Francis Drake  
Held on his way, learning from hour to hour  
To merge himself in immortality ;  
Learning the secrets of those pitiless laws

Which dwarf all mortal grief, all human pain,  
To something less than nothing by the side  
Of that eternal travail dimly guessed,  
Since first he felt in the miraculous dark  
The great bones of the Mastodon, that hulk  
Of immemorial death. He learned to judge  
The passing pageant of this outward world  
As by the touch-stone of that memory ;  
Even as in that country which some said  
Lay now not far, the great Tezcucan king,  
Resting his jewelled hand upon a skull,  
And on a smouldering glory of jewels throned  
There in his temple of the Unknown God  
Over the host of Aztec princes, clad  
In golden hauberks gleaming under soft  
Surcoats of green or scarlet feather-work,  
Could in the presence of a mightier power  
Than life or death give up his guilty sons,  
His only sons, to the sacrificial sword.  
And hour by hour the soul of Francis Drake,  
Unconscious as an oak-tree of its growth,  
Increased in strength and stature as he drew  
Earth, heaven, and hell within him, more and more  
For as the dream we call our world, with all  
Its hues is but a picture in the brain,  
So did his soul enfold the universe  
With gradual sense of superhuman power,  
While every visible shape within the vast  
Horizon seemed the symbol of some thought  
Waiting for utterance. He had found indeed  
God's own Nirvana, not of empty dream  
But of intensest life ! Nor did he think  
Aught of all this ; but, as the rustic deems  
The colours that he carries in his brain  
Are somehow all outside him while he peers  
Unaltered through two windows in his face,  
Drake only knew that as the four ships plunged  
Southward, the world mysteriously grew

More like a prophet's vision, hour by hour,  
Fraught with dark omens and significances,  
A world of hieroglyphs and sacred signs  
Wherein he seemed to read the truth that lay  
Hid from the Roman augurs when of old  
They told the future from the flight of birds.  
How vivid with disaster seemed the flight  
Of those blood-red flamingoes o'er the dim  
Blue steaming forest, like two terrible thoughts  
Flashing, unapprehended, through his brain!

And now, as they drove Southward, day and night,  
Through storm and calm, the shores that fled by  
Grew wilder, grander, with his growing soul,  
And pregnant with the approaching mystery.  
And now along the Patagonian coast  
They cruised, and in the solemn midnight saw  
Wildernesses of shaggy barren marl,  
Petrified seas of lava, league on league,  
Craters and bouldered slopes and granite cliffs  
With ragged rents, grim gorges, deep ravines,  
And precipice on precipice up-piled  
Innumerable to those dim distances  
Where, over valleys hanging in the clouds,  
Gigantic mountains and volcanic peaks  
Catching the wefts of cirrus fleece appeared  
To smoke against the sky, though all was now  
Dead as that frozen chaos of the moon,  
Or some huge passion of a slaughtered soul  
Prostrate under the marching of the stars.

At last, and in a silver dawn, they came  
Suddenly on a broad-winged estuary,  
And, in the midst of it, an island lay.  
There they found shelter, on its leeward side,  
And Drake convened upon the *Golden Hynde*  
His dread court-martial. Two long hours he heard  
Defence and accusation, then broke up

The conclave, and, with burning heart and brain,  
 Feverishly seeking everywhere some sign  
 To guide him, went ashore upon that isle,  
 And lo, turning a rugged point of rock,  
 He rubbed his eyes to find out if he dreamed,  
 For there—a Crusoe's wonder, a miracle,  
 A sign—before him stood on that lone strand  
 Stark, with a stern arm pointing out his way  
 And jangling still one withered skeleton,  
 The grim black gallows where Magellan hanged  
 His mutineers. Its base was white with bones  
 Picked by the gulls, and crumbling o'er the sand  
 A dread sea-salt, dry from the tides of time.  
 There, on that lonely shore, Death's finger-post  
 Stood like some old forgotten truth made strange  
 By the long lapse of many memories,  
 All starting up in resurrection now  
 As at the trump of doom, heroic ghosts  
 Out of the cells and graves of his deep brain  
 Reproaching him. *"Were this man not thy friend,  
 Ere now he should have died the traitor's death.  
 What wilt thou say to the others if they, too,  
 Prove false? Or wilt thou slay the lesser and save  
 The greater sinner? Nay, if thy right hand  
 Offend thee, cut it off!"* And, in one flash,  
 Drake saw his path and chose it.

With a voice

Low as the passionless anguished voice of Fate  
 That comprehends all pain, but girds it round  
 With iron, lest some random cry break out  
 For man's misguidance, he drew all his men  
 Around him, saying, "Ye all know how I loved  
 Doughty, who hath betrayed me twice and thrice,  
 For I still trusted him: he was no felon  
 That I should turn my heart away from him!  
 He is the type and image of man's laws;  
 While I—am lawless as the soul that still  
 Must sail and seek a world beyond the worlds,

A law behind earth's laws. I dare not judge!  
 But ye—who know the mighty goal we seek,  
 Who have seen him sap our courage, hour by hour,  
 Till God Himself almost appeared a dream  
 Behind his technicalities and doubts  
 Of aught he could not touch or handle; ye  
 Who have seen him stir up jealousy and strife  
 Between our seamen and our gentlemen,  
 Even as the world stirs up continual strife,  
 Bidding the man forget he is a man  
 With God's own patent of nobility;  
 Ye who have seen him strike this last sharp blow—  
 Sharper than any enemy hath struck,—  
 Ay, Jonathan, mine own familiar friend,  
 He whom I trusted, he alone could strike—  
 So sharply, for indeed I loved this man.  
 Judge ye—for see, I cannot. Do not doubt  
 I loved this man!  
 But now, if ye will let him have his life,  
 Oh, speak! But, if ye think it must be death,  
 Hold up your hands in silence!" His voice dropped,  
 And eagerly he whispered forth one word  
 Beyond the scope of Fate—"Yet, oh, my friends,  
 I would not have him die!" There was no sound  
 Save the long thunder of eternal seas,—  
 Drake bowed his head and prayed.

Then, suddenly,

One man upheld his hand; and, all at once,  
 A brawny forest of brown arms arose  
 In silence, and the great sea whispered *Death*.

There, with one big swift impulse, Francis Drake  
 Held out his right sun-blackened hand and gripped  
 The hand that Doughty proffered him; and lo,  
 Doughty laughed out and said, "Since I must die,  
 Let us have one more hour of comradeship,  
 One hour as old companions. Let us make  
 A feast here, on this island, ere I go

Where there is no more feasting." So they made  
A great and solemn banquet as the day  
Decreased ; and Doughty bade them all unlock  
Their sea-chest and bring out their rich array.  
There, by that wondering ocean of the West,  
In crimson doublets, lined and slashed with gold,  
In brodered lace and double golden chains  
Embossed with rubies and great cloudy pearls  
They feasted, gentlemen adventurers,  
Drinking old malmsey, as the sun sank down.

Now Doughty fronting the rich death of day  
And flourishing a silver pouncet-box  
With many a courtly jest and rare conceit,  
There as he sat in rich attire, out-braved  
The rest. Though darker-hued, yet richer far,  
His murrey-coloured doublet double-piled  
Of Genoa velvet, puffed with ciprus, shone ;  
For over its grave hues the gems that bossed  
His golden collar, wondrously relieved,  
Blazed lustrous to the West like stars. But Drake  
Wore simple black, with midnight silver slashed,  
And, at his side, a great two-handed sword.  
At last they rose, just as the sun's last rays  
Rested upon the heaving molten gold  
Immeasurable. The long slow sigh of the waves  
That creamed across the lonely time-worn reef  
All round the island seemed the very voice  
Of the Everlasting : black against the sea  
The gallows of Magellan stretched its arm  
With that gaunt skeleton and its rusty chain  
Creaking and swinging in the solemn breath  
Of eventide like some strange pendulum  
Measuring out the moments that remained.  
There did they take the holy sacrament  
Of Jesus' body and blood. Then Doughty and Drake  
Kissed each other, as brothers, on the cheek ;  
And Doughty knelt. And Drake, without one word,

Leaning upon the two-edged naked sword  
Stood at his side, with iron lips, and eyes  
Full of the sunset ; while the doomed man bowed  
His head upon a rock. The great sun dropped  
Suddenly, and the land and sea were dark ;  
And as it were a sign, Drake lifted up  
The gleaming sword. It seemed to sweep the heavens  
Down in its arc as he smote, once, and no more.

Then, for a moment, silence froze their veins,  
Till one fierce seaman stooped with a hoarse cry ;  
And, like an eagle clutching up its prey,  
His arm swooped down and bore the head aloft,  
Gorily streaming, by the long dark hair ;  
And a great shout went up, "So perish all  
Traitors to God and England." Then Drake turned  
And bade them to their ships ; and, wondering,  
They left him. As the boats thrust out from shore  
Brave old Tom Moone looked back with faithful eyes  
Like a great mastiff to his master's face.  
He, looming larger from his loftier ground  
Clad with the slowly gathering night of stars  
And gazing sea-ward o'er his quiet dead,  
Seemed like some Titan bronze in grandeur based  
Unshakeable until the crash of doom  
Shattered the black foundations of the world.



## BOOK IV.

DAWN, everlasting and almighty Dawn,  
Hailed by ten thousand names of death and birth,  
Who, chiefly by thy name of Sorrow, seem'st  
To half the world a sunset, God's great Dawn,  
Fair light of all earth's partings till we meet  
Where Dawn and sunset, mingling East and West,  
Shall make in some deep Orient of the soul  
One radiant Rose of Love for evermore ;  
Teach me, oh teach to bear thy broadening light,  
Thy deepening wonder, lest as old dreams fade  
With love's unfaith, like wasted hours of youth  
And dim illusions vanish in thy beam,  
Their rapture and their anguish break that heart  
Which loved them, and must love for ever now.  
Let thy great sphere of splendour, ring by ring  
For ever widening, draw new seas, new skies,  
Within my ken ; yet, as I still must bear  
This love, help me to grow in spirit with thee.  
Dawn on my song which trembles like a cloud  
Pierced with thy beauty. Rise, shine, as of old  
Across the wandering ocean in the sight  
Of those world-wandering mariners, when earth  
Rolled flat up to the Gates of Paradise,  
And each slow mist that curled its gold away  
From each new sea they furrowed into pearl  
Might bring before their blinded mortal eyes  
God and the Glory. Lighten as on the soul  
Of him that all night long in torment dire,

Anguish and thirst unceasing for thy ray  
Upon that lonely Patagonian shore  
Had lain as on the bitterest coasts of Hell.  
For all night long, mocked by the dreadful peace  
Of world-wide seas that darkly heaved and sank  
With cold recurrence, like the slow sad breath  
Of a fallen Titan dying all alone  
In lands beyond all human loneliness,  
While far and wide glimmers that broken targe  
Hurl'd from tremendous battle with the gods,  
And, as he breathes in pain, the chain-mail rings  
Round his broad breast a muffled rattling make  
For many a league, so seemed the sound of waves  
Upon those beaches—there, be-mocked all night,  
Beneath Magellan's gallows, Drake had watched  
Beside his dead ; and over him the stars  
Paled as the silver chariot of the moon  
Drove, and her white steeds ramped in a fury of foam  
On splendid peaks of cloud. The *Golden Hynde*  
Slept with those other shadows on the bay.  
Between him and his home the Atlantic heaved ;  
And, on the darker side, across the strait  
Of starry sheen that softly rippled and flowed  
Betwixt the mainland and his isle, it seemed  
Death's Gates indeed burst open. The night yawned  
Like a foul wound. Black shapes of the outer dark  
Poured out of forests older than the world ;  
And, just as reptiles that take form and hue,  
Speckle and blotch, in strange assimilation  
From thorn and scrub and stone and the waste earth  
Through which they crawl, so that almost they seem  
The incarnate spirits of their wilderness,  
Were these most horrible kindred of the night.  
Æonian glooms unfathomable, grim aisles,  
Grotesque, distorted boughs and dancing shades  
Out-belched their dusky brood on the dim shore ;  
Monsters with sooty limbs, red-raddled eyes,  
And faces painted yellow, women and men ;

Fierce naked giants howling to the moon,  
And loathlier Gorgons with long snaky tresses  
Pouring vile purple over pendulous breasts  
Like wine-bags. On the mainland beach they lit  
A brushwood fire that reddened creek and cove  
And lapped their swarthy limbs with hideous tongues  
Of flame ; so near that by their light Drake saw  
The blood upon the dead man's long black hair  
Clotting corruption. The fierce funeral pyre  
Of all things fair seemed rolling on that shore ;  
And in that dull red battle of smoke and flame,  
While the sea crunched the pebbles, and dark drums  
Rumbled out of the gloom as if this earth  
Had some Titanic tigress for a soul  
Purring in forests of Eternity  
Over her own grim dreams, his lonely spirit  
Passed through the circles of a world-wide waste  
Darker than ever Dante roamed. No gulf  
Was this of fierce harmonious reward,  
Where Evil moans in anguish after death,  
Where all men reap as they have sown, where gluttons  
Gorge upon toads and usurers gulp hot streams  
Of molten gold. This was that Malebolge  
Which hath no harmony to mortal ears,  
But seems the reeling and tremendous dream  
Of some omnipotent madman. There he saw  
The naked giants dragging to the flames  
Young captives hideous with a new despair :  
He saw great craggy blood-stained stones upheaved  
To slaughter, saw through mists of blood and fire  
The cannibal feast prepared, saw filthy hands  
Rend limb from limb, and almost dreamed he saw  
Foul mouths a-drip with quivering human flesh  
And horrible laughter in the crimson storm  
That clomb and leapt and stabbed at the high heaven  
Till the whole night seemed saturate with red.

And all night long upon the *Golden Hynde*,

A cloud upon the waters, brave Tom Moone  
Watched o'er the bulwarks for some dusky plunge  
To warn him if that savage crew should mark  
His captain and swim over to his isle.  
Whistle in hand he watched, his boat well ready,  
His men low-crouched around him, swarthy faces  
Grim-chinned upon the taffrail, muttering oaths  
That trampled down the fear i' their bristly throats,  
While at their sides a dreadful hint of steel  
Sent stray gleams to the stars. But little heed  
Had Drake of all that menaced him, though oft  
Some wandering giant, belching from the feast,  
All blood-besmeared, would come so near he heard  
His heavy breathing o'er the narrow strait.  
Yet little care had Drake, for though he sat  
Bowed in the body above his quiet dead,  
His burning spirit wandered through the wastes,  
Wandered through hells behind the apparent hell,  
Horrors immeasurable, clutching at dreams  
Found fair of old, but now most foul. The world  
Leered at him through its old remembered mask  
Of beauty: the green grass that clothed the fields  
Of England (shallow, shallow fairy dream !)  
What was it but the hair of dead men's graves,  
Rooted in death, enriched with all decay ?  
And like a leprosy the hawthorn bloom  
Crawled o'er the whitening bosom of the spring ;  
And bird and beast and insect, ay and man,  
How fat they fed on one another's blood !  
And Love, what faith in Love, when spirit and flesh  
Are found of such a filthy composition ?  
And Knowledge, God, his mind went reeling back  
To that dark voyage on the deadly coast  
Of Panama, where one by one his men  
Sickened and died of some unknown disease,  
Till Joseph, his own brother, in his arms  
Died ; and Drake trampled down all tender thought,  
All human grief, and sought to find the cause,

For his crew's sake, the ravenous unknown cause  
Of that fell scourge. There, in his own dark cabin,  
Lit by the wild light of the swinging lanthorn,  
He laid the naked body on that board  
Where they had supped together. He took the knife  
From the ague-stricken surgeon's palsied hands,  
And while the ship rocked in the eternal seas  
And dark waves lapped against the rolling hulk  
Making the silence terrible with voices,  
He opened his own brother's cold white corse,  
That pale deserted mansion of a soul,  
Bidding the surgeon mark, with his own eyes,  
While yet he had strength to use them, the foul spots,  
The swollen liver, the strange sodden heart,  
The yellow intestines. Yea, his dry lips hissed  
There in the stark face of Eternity  
"Seëst thou? Seëst thou? Knowest thou what it  
means?"

Then, like a dream up-surged the belfried night  
Of Saint Bartholomew, the scented palaces  
Whence harlots leered out on the twisted streets  
Of Paris, choked with slaughter! Europe flamed  
With human torches, living altar candles,  
Lighted before the Cross where men had hanged  
The Christ of little children. Cirque by cirque  
The world-wide hell reeled round him, East and West,  
To where the tortured Indians worked the will  
Of lordly Spain in golden-famed Peru.  
"God, is thy world a madman's dream?" he groaned:  
And suddenly, the clamour on the shore  
Sank and that savage horde melted away  
Into the midnight forest as it came,  
Leaving no sign, save where the brushwood fire  
Still smouldered like a ruby in the gloom;  
And into the inmost caverns of his mind  
That other clamour sank, and there was peace.  
"A madman's dream," he whispered, "Ay, to me  
A madman's dream," but better, better far

Than that which bears upon its awful gates,  
Gates of a hell defined, unalterable,  
*Abandon hope all ye who enter here !*

Here, here at least the dawn hath power to bring  
New light, new hope, new battles. Men may fight  
And sweep away that evil, if no more,  
At least from the small circle of their swords ;  
Then die, content if they have struck one stroke  
For freedom, knowledge, brotherhood ; one stroke  
To hasten that great kingdom God proclaims  
Each morning through the trumpets of the Dawn.

And far away, in Italy, that night  
Young Galileo, gazing upward, heard  
The self-same whisper from the abyss of stars  
Which lured the soul of Shakespeare as he lay  
Dreaming in may-sweet England, even now,  
And with its infinite music called once more  
The soul of Drake out to the unknown West.

Now like a wild rose in the fields of heaven  
Slipt forth the slender fingers of the Dawn,  
And drew the great grey Eastern curtains back  
From the ivory saffroned couch. Rosily slid  
One shining foot and one warm rounded knee  
From silken coverlets of the tossed-back clouds.  
Then, like the meeting after desolate years,  
Face to remembered face, Drake saw the Dawn  
Step forth in naked splendour o'er the sea ;  
Dawn, bearing still her rich divine increase  
Of beauty, love, and wisdom round the world ;  
The same, yet not the same. So strangely gleamed  
Her pearl and rose across the sapphire waves  
That scarce he knew the dead man at his feet.  
His world was made anew. Strangely his voice  
Rang through that solemn Eden of the morn  
Calling his men, and stranger than a dream  
Their boats black-blurred against the crimson East,

Or flashing misty sheen where'er the light  
Smote on their smooth wet sides, like seraph ships  
Moved in a dewy glory towards the land ;  
Their oars of glittering diamond broke the sea  
As by enchantment into burning jewels  
And scattered rainbows from their flaming blades.  
The clear green water lapping round their prows,  
The words of sharp command as now the keels  
Crunched on his lonely shore, and the following wave  
Leapt slapping o'er the sterns, in that new light  
Were more than any miracle. At last  
Drake, as they grouped a little way below  
The crumbling sandy cliff whereon he stood,  
Seeming to overshadow them as he loomed  
A cloud of black against the crimson sky,  
Spoke, as a man may hardly speak but once :  
" My seamen, oh my friends, companions, kings ;  
For I am least among you, being your captain ;  
And ye are men, and all men born are kings,  
By right divine, and I the least of these  
Because I must usurp the throne of God  
And sit in judgment, even till I have set  
My seal upon the red wax of this blood,  
This blood of my dead friend, ere it grow cold.  
Not all the waters of that mighty sea  
Could wash my hands of sin if I should now  
Falter upon my path. But look to it, you,  
Whose word was doom last night to this dead man ;  
Look to it, I say, look to it ! Brave men might shrink  
From this great voyage ; but the heart of him  
Who dares turn backward now must be so hardy  
That God might make a thousand millstones of it  
To hang about the necks of those that hurt  
Some little child, and cast them in the sea.  
Yet if ye will be found so more than bold,  
Speak now, and I will hear you ; God will judge.  
But ye shall take four ships of these my five,  
Tear out the lions from their painted shields.

And speed you homeward. Leave me but one ship,  
My *Golden Hynde*, and five good friends, nay one,  
To watch when I must sleep, and I will prove  
This judgment just against the winds of the world.  
Now ye that will return, speak, let me know you,  
Or be for ever silent ; for I swear  
Over this butchered body, if any swerve  
Hereafter from the straight and perilous way,  
He shall not die alone. What ? Will none speak ?  
My comrades and my friends ! Yet ye must learn,  
Mark me, my friends, I'd have you all to know  
That ye are kings. I'll have no jealousies  
Aboard my fleet. I'll have the gentleman  
To pull and haul wi' the seaman. I'll not have  
That canker of the Spaniards in my fleet.  
Ye that were captains, I cashier you all.  
I'll have no captains ; I'll have nought but seamen,  
Obedient to my will, because I serve  
England. What, will ye murmur ? Now, beware,  
Lest I should bid you homeward all alone,  
You whose white hands are found too delicate  
For aught but dallying with your jewelled swords !  
And thou, too, master Fletcher, my ship's chaplain,  
Mark me, I'll have no priest-craft. I have heard  
Overmuch talk of judgment from thy lips,  
God's judgment here, God's judgment there, upon us !  
Whene'er the winds are contrary, thou takest  
Their powers upon thee for thy moment's end.  
Thou art God's minister, not God's oracle :  
Chain up thy tongue a little, or, by His wounds,  
If thou canst read this wide world like a book,  
Thou hast so little to fear, I'll set thee adrift  
On God's great sea to find thine own way home.  
Why, 'tis these very tyrannies o' the soul  
We strike at when we strike at Spain for England ;  
And shall we here, in this great wilderness,  
Ungrappled and unchallenged, out of sight,  
Alone, without one struggle, sink that flag



Which, when the cannon thundered, could but stream  
Triumphant over all the storms of death.

Nay, master Wynter and my gallant captains,  
I see ye are tamed. Take up your ranks again  
In humbleness, remembering ye are kings,  
Kings for the sake and by the will of England,  
Therefore her servants till your lives' last end.

\* Comrades, mistake not this, our little fleet  
Is freighted with the golden heart of England,  
And, if we fail, that golden heart will break.  
The world's wide eyes are on us, and our souls  
Are woven together into one great flag  
Of England. Shall we strike it? Shall it be rent  
Asunder with small discord, party strife,  
Ephemeral conflict of contemptible tongues,  
Or shall it be blazoned, blazoned evermore  
On the most heaven-wide page of history?  
This is that hour, I know it in my soul,  
When we must choose for England. Ye are kings,  
And sons of Vikings, exiled from your throne.  
Have ye forgotten? Nay, your blood remembers!  
There is your kingdom, Vikings, that great ocean  
Whose tang is in your nostrils. Ye must choose  
Whether to re-assume it now for England,  
To claim its thunders for her panoply,  
To lay its lightnings in her sovereign hands,  
Win her the great commandment of the sea  
And let its glory roll with her dominion  
Round the wide world for ever, sweeping back  
All evil deeds and dreams, or whether to yield  
For evermore that kingdom. Ye must learn  
Here in this golden dawn our great emprise  
Is greater than we knew. Eye hath not seen,  
Ear hath not heard what came across the dark  
Last night, as there anointed with that blood  
I knelt and saw the wonder that should be.  
I saw new heavens of freedom, a new earth  
Released from all old tyrannies. I saw

The brotherhood of man, for which we rode,  
Most ignorant of the splendour of our spears,  
Against the crimson dynasties of Spain.  
Mother of freedom, home and hope and love,  
Our little island, far, how far away,  
I saw thee shatter the whole world of hate,  
I saw the sunrise on thy helmet flame  
With new-born hope for all the world in thee!  
Come now, to sea, to sea!"

And ere they knew  
What power impelled them, with one mighty cry  
They lifted up their hearts to the new dawn  
And hastened down the shores and launched the boats,  
And in the fierce white out-draught of the waves  
Thrust with their brandished oars and the boats leapt  
Out, and they settled at the groaning thwarts,  
And the white water boiled before their blades,  
As, with Drake's iron hand upon the helm,  
His own boat led the way; and ere they knew  
What power as of a wind bore them along,  
Anchor was up, their hands were on the sheets,  
The sails were broken out and that small squadron  
Was flying like a sea-bird to the South.

Now to the strait Magellanus they came,  
And entered in with ringing shouts of joy.  
Nor did they think there was a fairer strait  
In all the world than this which lay so calm  
Between great silent mountains crowned with snow,  
Unutterably lonely. Marvellous  
The pomp of dawn and sunset on those heights,  
And like a strange new sacrilege the advance  
Of prows that ploughed that time-forgotten tide.  
But soon rude flaws, cross currents, tortuous channels  
Bewildered them, and many a league they drove  
As down some vaster Acheron, while the coasts  
With wailing voices cursed them all night long,

And once again the hideous fires leapt red  
By many a grim wrenched crag and gaunt ravine.  
So for a hundred leagues of whirling spume  
They groped, till suddenly, far away, they saw  
Full of the sunset, like a cup of gold,  
The purple Westward portals of the strait.  
Onward o'er roughening waves they plunged and reached  
*Capo Desiderato*, where they saw  
What seemed stupendous in that lonely place,—  
Gaunt, black, and sharp as death against the sky  
The Cross, the great black Cross on Cape Desire,  
Which dead Magellan raised upon the height  
To guide, or so he thought, his wandering ships,  
Not knowing they had left him to his doom,  
Not knowing how with tears, with tears of joy,  
Rapture, and terrible triumph, and deep awe,  
Another should come voyaging and read  
Unutterable glories in that sign;  
While his rough seamen raised their mighty shout  
And, once again, before his wondering eyes,  
League upon league of awful burnished gold,  
Rolled the unknown immeasurable sea.

Now, in those days, as even Magellan held,  
Men thought that Southward of the strait there swept  
Firm land up to the white Antarticke Pole,  
Which now not far they deemed. But when Drake passed  
From out the strait to take his Northward way  
Up the Pacific coast, a great head-wind  
Suddenly smote them; and the heaving seas  
Bulged all around them into billowy hills,  
Dark rolling mountains, whose majestic crests  
Like wild white flames far-blown and savagely flickering  
Swept through the clouds; and on their sullen slopes  
Like wind-whipt withered leaves those little ships,  
Now hurtled to the Zenith and now plunged  
Down into bottomless gulfs, were suddenly scattered  
And whirled away. Drake, on the *Golden Hynde*,

One moment saw them near him, soaring up  
Above him on the huge o'erhanging billows  
As if to crash down on his poop ; the next,  
A mile of howling sea had swept between  
Each of those wind-whipt straws, and they were gone  
Through roaring deserts of embattled death,  
Where, like a hundred thousand chariots charged  
With lightnings and with thunders, one great wave  
Leading the unleashed ocean down the storm  
Hurled them away to Southward.

One last glimpse  
Drake caught o' the *Marygold*, when some mighty vortex  
Wide as the circle of the wide sea-line  
Swept them together again. He saw her staggering  
With mast snapt short and wreckage-tangled deck  
Where men like insects clung. He saw the waves  
Leap over her mangled hulk, like wild white wolves,  
Volleying out of the clouds down dismal steeps  
Of green-black water. Like a wounded steed  
Quivering upon its haunches, up she heaved  
Her head to throw them off. Then, in one mass  
Of fury crashed the great deep over her,  
Trampling her down, down into the nethermost pit,  
As with a madman's wrath. She rose no more,  
And in the stream of the ocean's hurricane laughter  
The *Golden Hynde* went hurtling to the South,  
With sails rent into ribbons and her mast  
Snapt like a twig. Yea, where Magellan thought  
Firm land had been, the little *Golden Hynde*  
Whirled like an autumn leaf through league on league  
Of bursting seas, chaos on crashing chaos,  
A rolling wilderness of charging Alps  
That shook the world with their tremendous war ;  
Grim beetling cliffs that grappled with clamorous gulfs,  
Valleys that yawned to swallow the wide heaven ;  
Immense white-flowering fluctuant precipices,  
And hills that swooped down at the throat of hell ;

From Pole to Pole, one blanching bursting storm  
Of world-wide oceans, where the huge Pacific  
Roared greetings to the Atlantic and both swept  
In broad white cataracts, league on struggling league,  
Pursuing and pursued, immeasurable,  
With Titan hands grasping the rent black sky  
East, West, North, South. Then, then was battle indeed  
Of midget men upon that wisp of grass  
The *Golden Hynde*, who, as her masts crashed, hung  
Clearing the tiny wreckage from small decks  
With ant-like weapons. Not their captain's voice  
Availed them now amidst the deafening thunder  
Of seas that felt the heavy hand of God,  
Only they saw across the blinding spume  
In steely flashes, grand and grim, a face,  
Like the last glimmer of faith among mankind,  
Calm in this warring universe, where Drake  
Stood, lashed to his post, beside the helm. Black seas  
Buffeted him. Half-stunned he dashed away  
The sharp brine from his eagle eyes and turned  
To watch some mountain-range come rushing down  
As if to o'erwhelm them utterly. Once, indeed,  
Welkin and sea were one black wave, white-fanged,  
White-crested, and up-heaped so mightily  
That, though it coursed more swiftly than a herd  
Of Titan steeds upon some terrible plain  
Nigh the huge City of Ombos, yet it seemed  
Most strangely slow, with all those crumbling crests  
Each like a cataract on a mountain-side,  
And moved with the steady majesty of doom  
High over him. One moment's flash of fear,  
And yet not fear, but rather life's regret,  
Felt Drake, then laughed a low deep laugh of joy  
Such as men taste in battle; yea, 'twas good  
To grapple thus with death; one low deep laugh,  
One mutter as of a lion about to spring,  
Then burst that thunder o'er him. Height o'er height  
The heavens rolled down, and waves were all the world.

Meanwhile, in England, dreaming of her sailor,  
Far off, his heart's bride waited, of a proud  
And stubborn house the bright and gracious flower.  
Whom oft her father urged with scanty grace  
That Drake was dead and she had best forget  
The fellow, he grunted. For her father's heart  
Was fettered with small memories, mocked by all  
The greater world's traditions and the trace  
Of earth's low pedigree among the suns,  
Ringed with the terrible twilight of the Gods,  
Ringed with the blood-red dusk of dying nations,  
His faith was in his grandam's mighty skirt,  
And, in that awful consciousness of power,  
Had it not been that even in this he feared  
To sully her silken flounce or farthingale  
Wi' the white dust on his hands, he would have chalked  
To his own shame, thinking it shame, the word  
Nearest to God in its divine embrace  
Of agonies and glories, the dread word  
*Demos* across that door in Nazareth  
Whence came the prentice carpenter whose voice  
Hath shaken kingdoms down, whose menial gibbet  
Rises triumphant o'er the wreck of Empires  
And stretches out its arms amongst the Stars.  
But she, his daughter, only let her heart  
Loveably forge a charter for her love,  
Cheat her false creed with faithful faery dreams  
That wrapt her love in mystery, thought, perchance,  
He came of some unhappy noble race  
Ruined in battle for some lost high cause.  
And, in the general mixture of men's blood,  
Her dream was truer than his whose bloodless pride  
Urged her to wed the chinless moon-struck fool  
Sprung from five hundred years of idiocy  
Who now besought her hand; would force her bear  
Some heir to a calf's tongue and a coronet,  
Whose cherished taints of blood will please his friends  
With "Yea, Sir William's first-born hath the freak,

The family freak, being embryonic. Yea,  
And with a fine half-wittedness, forsooth.  
Praise God, our children's children yet shall see  
The lord o' the manor muttering to himself  
At midnight by the gryphon-guarded gates,  
Or gnawing his nails in desolate corridors,  
Or pacing moonlit halls, dagger in hand,  
Waiting to stab his father's pitiless ghost."  
So she—the girl—Sweet Bess of Sydenham,  
Most innocently proud, was prouder yet  
Than thus to let her heart stoop to the lure  
Of lordling lovers, though her unstained soul  
Slumbered amidst those dreams as in old tales  
The princess in the enchanted forest sleeps  
Till the prince wakes her with a kiss and draws  
The far-flung hues o' the gleaming magic web  
Into one heart of flame. And now, for Drake,  
She slept like Brynhild in a ring of fire  
Which he must pass to win her. For the wrath  
Of Spain now flamed, awaiting his return,  
All round the seas of home; and even the Queen  
Elizabeth blenched, as that tremendous Power  
Menaced the heart of England, blenched and vowed  
Drake's head to Spain's ambassadors, though still  
By subtlety she hoped to find some way  
Later to save or warn him ere he came.  
Perchance too, nay, most like, he will be slain  
Or even now lies dead, out in the West,  
She thought, and then the promise works no harm.  
But, day by day, there came as on the wings  
Of startled winds from o'er the Spanish Main,  
Strange echoes as of sacked and clamouring ports  
And battered gates of fabulous golden cities,  
A murmur out of the sunset, of Peru,  
A sea-bird's wail from Lima. While no less  
The wrathful menace gathered up its might  
All round our little isle; till now the King  
Philip of Spain had secretly decreed

The building of huge docks from which to launch  
 A Fleet Invincible that should sweep the seas  
 Of all the world, throttle with one broad grasp  
 All Protestant rebellion, having stablished  
 His red feet in the Netherlands, thence to hurl  
 His whole World-Empire at this little isle,  
 England, our mother, home and hope and love,  
 And bend her neck beneath his yoke. For now  
 No half surrender sought he. At his back,  
 Robed with the scarlet of a thousand martyrs,  
 Admonishing him, stood Rome, and, in her hand,  
 Grasping the Cross of Christ by its great hilt,  
 She pointed it, like a dagger, tow'rds the throat  
 Of England.

One long year, two years had passed  
 Since Drake set sail from grey old Plymouth Sound;  
 And in those woods of faery wonder still  
 Slumbered his love in steadfast faith. But now  
 With louder lungs her father urged—"He is dead:  
 Forget him. There is one that loves you, seeks  
 Your hand in marriage, and he is a goodly match  
 E'en for my daughter. You shall wed him, Bess!"  
 But when the new-found lover came to woo,  
 Glancing in summer silks and radiant hose,  
 Whipt doublet and enormous pointed shoon,  
 She played him like a fish and sent him home  
 Spluttering with dismay, a stickleback  
 Discoloured, a male minnow of dimpled streams  
 With all its rainbows paling in the prime,  
 To hide amongst his lilies, while once more  
 She took her casement seat that overlooked  
 The sea and read in Master Spenser's book,  
 Which Francis gave "To my dear lady and queen  
 Bess," that most rare processional of love—  
*"Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song!"*  
 Yet did her father urge her day by day,  
 And day by day her mother dinned her ears



With petty saws, as—"When *I* was a girl,"  
And "I remember what *my* father said,"  
And "Love, oh feather-fancies plucked from geese  
You call your poets!" Yet she hardly meant  
To slight true love, save in her daughter's heart;  
For the old folk ever find it hard to see  
The passion of their children. When it wakes,  
The child becomes a stranger. That small bird  
Which was its heart hath left the fostering nest  
And flown they know not whither. So with Bess;  
But since her soul still slumbered, and the moons  
Rolled on and blurred her soul's particular love  
With the vague unknown impulse of her youth,  
Her brave resistance often melted now  
In tears, and her will weakened day by day;  
Till on a dreadful summer morn there came,  
Borne by a wintry flaw, home to the Thames,  
A bruised and battered ship, all that was left,  
So said her crew, of Drake's ill-fated fleet.  
John Wynter, her commander, told the tale  
Of how the *Golden Hynde* and *Marygold*  
Had by the wind Euroclydon been driven  
Sheer o'er the howling edges of the world;  
Of how himself by God's good providence  
Was hurled into the strait *Magellanus*;  
Of how on the horrible frontiers of the Void  
He had watched in vain, lit red with beacon-fires  
The desperate coasts o' the black abyss, whence none  
Ever returned, though many a week he watched  
Beneath the Cross; and only saw God's wrath  
Burn through the heavens and devastate the mountains,  
And hurl unheard of oceans roaring down  
After the lost ships in one cataract  
Of thunder and splendour and fury and rolling doom.

Then, with a bitter triumph in his face,  
As if this were the natural end of all  
Such vile plebeians, as if he had foreseen it,

As if himself had breathed a tactful hint  
Into the aristocratic ears of God,  
Her father broke the last frail barriers down,  
Broke the poor listless will o' the lonely girl,  
Who careless now of aught but misery  
Promised to wed their lordling. Mighty speed  
They made to press that loveless marriage on ;  
And ere the May had mellowed into June  
Her marriage eve had come. Her cold hands held  
Drake's gift. She scarce could see her name, writ broad  
By that strong hand as it was, *To my queen Bess*.  
She looked out through her casement o'er the sea,  
Listening its old enchanted moan, which seemed  
Striving to speak, she knew not what. Its breath  
Fluttered the roses round the grey old walls,  
And shook the starry jasmine. A great moon  
Hung like a red lamp in the sycamore.  
A corn-crake in the hay-fields far away  
Chirped like a cricket, and the night-jar churred  
His passionate love-song. Soft-winged moths besieged  
Her lantern. Under many a star-stabbed elm  
The nightingale began his golden song,  
Whose warm thick notes are each a drop of blood  
From that small throbbing breast against the thorn  
Pressed close to turn the white rose into red ;  
Even as her lawn-clad may-white bosom pressed  
Quivering against the bars, while her dark hair  
Streamed round her shoulders and her small bare feet  
Gleamed in the dusk. Then spake she to her maid—  
"I cannot sleep, I cannot sleep to-night.  
Bring thy lute thither and sing. Say, dost thou think  
The dead can watch us from their distant world ?  
Can our dead friends be near us when we weep ?  
I wish 'twere so ! for then my love would come,  
No matter then how far, my love would come,  
And press a light kiss on these aching eyes  
And say, 'Grieve not, dear heart, for I know all,  
And I forgive thee.' Ah, then, I should sleep,

Sleep, sleep and dream once more. Last night, last night  
I know not if it were that song of thine  
Which tells of some poor lover, crazed with pain,  
Who wanders to the grave-side of his love  
And knocks at that cold door until his love  
Opens it, and they two for some brief while  
Forget their doom in one another's arms  
Once more ; for, oh, last night, I had a dream ;  
My love came to me through the Gates of Death,  
I know not how he came, I only know  
His arms were round me, and, from far away,  
From far beyond the stars it seemed, his voice  
Breathed in unutterable grief, farewells,  
Of shuddering sweetness, clasped in one small word  
*Sweetheart*, a joy untold, an untold pain,  
Far, far away, although his breath beat warm  
Against my cheek and dried mine own poor tears.  
Ah, sing that song once more ; for I have heard  
There are some songs, and this was one I am sure,  
Like the grey poppies of those dreaming fields  
Where poor dead lovers drift, and in their pain  
We lose our own. Give me that poppiéd sleep,  
And if—in dreams—I touch my true love's lips,  
Trust me I will not ask ever to wake  
Again." Whereat the maiden touched her lute  
And sang, low-toned, with pity in her eyes.

Then Bess bowed down her lovely head : her breast  
Heaved with short sobs and, sickening at the heart,  
She grasped the casement, moaning, "Love, Love, Love,  
Come quickly, come, before it is too late,  
Come quickly, oh come quickly."

Then her maid  
Slipped a soft arm around her and gently drew  
The supple quivering body, shaken with sobs,  
And all that firm young sweetness, to her breast,  
And led her to her couch, and all night long  
She watched beside her, till the marriage morn

Blushed in the heartless East. Then swiftly flew  
The pitiless moments, till—as in a dream—  
And borne along by dreams, or like a lily  
Cut from its anchorage in the stream to glide  
Down the smooth bosom of an unknown world  
Through fields of unknown blossom, so moved Bess  
Amongst her maids, as the procession passed  
Forth to the little church upon the cliffs,  
And, as in those days was the bridal mode,  
Her lustrous hair in billowing beauty streamed  
Dishevelled o'er her shoulders, while the sun  
Caressed her bent and glossy head, and shone  
Over the deep blue, white-flaked, wrinkled sea,  
On full-blown rosy-petalled sails that flashed  
Like flying blossoms fallen from her crown.

## BOOK V.

## I.

*With the fruit of Aladdin's garden clustering thick in her hold,  
 With rubies awash in her scuppers and her bilge ablaze with  
 gold,  
 A world in arms behind her to sever her heart from home,  
 The Golden Hynde drove onward over the glittering foam.*

## II.

*If we go as we came, by the Southward, we meet w<sup>th</sup> the fleets  
 of Spain !  
 'Tis a thousand to one against us : we'll turn to the West again !  
 We have captured a China pilot, his charts and his golden keys :  
 We'll sail to the golden Gateway, over the golden seas.*

OVER the immeasurable molten gold  
 Wrapped in a golden haze, onward they drew ;  
 And now they saw the tiny purple quay  
 Grow larger and darker and brighten into brown  
 Across the swelling sparkle of the waves.  
 Brown on the quay, a train of tethered mules  
 Munched at the nose-bags, while a Spaniard drowsed  
 On guard beside what seemed at first a heap  
 Of fish, then slowly turned to silver bars  
 Up-piled and glistening in the enchanted sun.  
 Nor did that sentry wake as, like a dream,  
 The *Golden Hynde* divided the soft sleep  
 Of warm green lapping water, sidled up,  
 Sank sail, and moored beside the quay. But Drake,  
 Lightly leaping ashore and stealing nigh,

Picked up the Spaniard's long gay-ribboned gun  
Close to his ear. At once, without a sound,  
The watchman opened his dark eyes and stared  
As at strange men who suddenly had come,  
Borne by some magic carpet, from the stars ;  
Then, with a courtly bow, his right hand thrust  
Within the lace embroideries of his breast,  
Politely Drake, with pained apologies  
For this disturbance of a cavalier  
Napping on guard, straightway resolved to make  
Complete amends, by now relieving him  
Of these—which doubtless troubled his repose—  
These anxious bars of silver. With that word  
Two seamen leaped ashore and, gathering up  
The bars in a stout old patch of tawny sail,  
Slung them aboard. No sooner this was done  
Than out o' the valley, like a foolish jest  
Out of the mouth of some great John-a-dreams,  
In soft procession of buffoonery  
A woolly train of llamas proudly came  
Stepping by two and two along the quay,  
Laden with pack on pack of silver bars  
And driven by a Spaniard. His amaze  
The seamen greeted with profuser thanks  
For his most punctual thought and opportune  
Courtesy. None the less they must avouch  
It pained them much to see a cavalier  
Turned carrier ; and, at once, they must insist  
On easing him of that too sordid care.

Then out from Tarapaca once again  
They sailed, their hold a glimmering mine of wealth,  
Towards Arica and Lima, where they deemed  
The prize of prizes waited unaware.  
For every year a gorgeous galleon sailed  
With all the harvest of Potosi's mines  
And precious stones from dead king's diadems,  
Aztecs' and Incas' gem-encrusted crowns,

Pearls from the glimmering Temples of the Moon,  
Rich opals with their milky rainbow-clouds,  
White diamonds from the Temples of the Sun,  
Carbuncles flaming scarlet, amethysts,  
Rubies, and sapphires ; these to Spain she brought  
To glut her priestly coffers. Now not far  
Ahead they deemed she lay upon that coast,  
Crammed with the lustrous Indies, wrung with threat  
And torture from the naked Indian slaves.  
To him that spied her top-sails first a prize  
Drake offered of the wondrous chain he wore ;  
And every seaman, every ship-boy, watched  
Not only for the prize, but for their friends,  
If haply these had weathered through the storm.  
Nor did they know their friends had homeward turned,  
Bearing to England and to England's Queen,  
And his heart's queen, the tale that Drake was dead.

Northward they cruised along a warm wild coast  
That like a most luxurious goddess drowsed  
Supine to heaven, her arms behind her head,  
One knee up-thrust to make a mountain-peak,  
Her rosy breasts up-heaving their soft snow  
In distant Andes, and her naked side  
With one rich curve for half a hundred leagues  
Bathed by the creaming foam ; her heavy hair  
Fraught with the perfume of a thousand forests  
Tossed round about her beauty ; and her mouth  
A scarlet mystery of distant flower  
Up-turned to take the kisses of the sun.  
But like a troop of boys let loose from school  
The adventurers went by, startling the stillness  
Of that voluptuous dream-encumbered shore  
With echoing shouts of laughter and alien song.

But as they came to Arica, from afar  
They heard the clash of bells upon the breeze,  
And knew that Rumour with her thousand wings

Had rushed before them. Horsemen in the night  
Had galloped through the white coast-villages  
And spread the dreadful cry "El Draque" abroad  
And when the gay adventurers drew nigh  
They found the quays deserted, and the ships  
All flown, except one little fishing-boat  
Wherein an old man like a tortoise moved  
A wrinkled head above the rusty net  
His crawling hands repaired. He seemed to dwell  
Outside the world of war and peace, outside  
Everything save his daily task, and cared  
No whit who else might win or lose ; for all  
The pilot asked of him without demur  
He answered, scarcely looking from his work.  
A galleon laden with eight hundred bars  
Of silver, not three hours ago had flown  
Northward, he muttered. Ere the words were out,  
The will of Drake thrilled through the *Golden Hylde*  
Like one sharp trumpet-call, and ere they knew  
What power impelled them, crowding on all sail  
Northward they surged, and roaring down the wind  
At Chiuli, port of Arequipa, saw  
The chase at anchor. Wondering they came  
With all the gunners waiting at their guns  
Bare-armed and silent—nearer, nearer yet,—  
Close to the enemy. But no sight or sound  
Of living creature stirred upon her decks.  
Only a great grey cat lay in the sun  
Upon a warm smooth cannon-butt. A chill  
Ran through the veins of even the boldest there  
At that too peaceful silence. Cautiously  
Drake neared her in his pinnace : cautiously,  
Cutlass in hand, up that mysterious hull  
He clomb, and wondered, as he climbed, to breathe  
The friendly smell o' the pitch and hear the waves  
With their incessant old familiar sound  
Crackling and slapping against her windward flank.  
A ship of dreams was that ; for when they reached



The silent deck, they saw no crouching forms,  
 They heard no sound of life. Only the hot  
 Creak of the cordage whispered in the sun.  
 The cat stood up and yawned, and slunk away  
 Slowly, with furtive glances. The great hold  
 Was empty, and the rich cabin stripped and bare.  
 Suddenly one of the seamen with a cry  
 Pointed where, close inshore, a little boat  
 Stole towards the town; and, with a louder cry,  
 Drake bade his men aboard the *Golden Hynde*.  
 Scarce had they pulled two hundred yards away  
 When, with a roar that seemed to buffet the heavens  
 And rip the heart of the sea out, one red flame  
 Blackened with fragments, the great galleon burst  
 Asunder! All the startled waves were strewn  
 With wreckage; and Drake laughed—"My lads, we have  
 diced

With death to-day, and won! My merry lads,  
 It seems that Spain is bolting with the stakes!  
 Now, if I have to stretch the skies for sails  
 And summon the blasts of God up from the South  
 To fill my canvas, I will overhaul  
 Those dusky devils with the treasure-ship  
 That holds our hard-earned booty. Pull hard all,  
 Hard for the *Golden Hynde*."

. . . . .

And so they came

At dead of night on Callao de Lima!  
 They saw the harbour lights across the waves  
 Glittering, and the shadowy hulks of ships  
 Gathered together like a flock of sheep  
 Within the port. With shouts and clink of chains  
 A shadowy ship was entering from the North,  
 And like the shadow of that shadow slipped  
 The *Golden Hynde* beside her thro' the gloom;  
 And side by side they anchored in the port  
 Amidst the shipping! Over the dark tide  
 A small boat from the customs-house drew near.

A sleepy, yawning, gold-laced officer  
Boarded the *Golden Hynde*, and with a cry,  
Stumbling against a cannon-butt, he saw  
The bare-armed British seamen in the gloom  
All waiting by their guns. Wildly he plunged  
Over the side and urged his boat away,  
Crying, "El Draque! El Draque!" At that dread word  
The darkness filled with clamour, and the ships,  
Cutting their cables, drifted here and there  
In mad attempts to seek the open sea.  
Wild lights burnt hither and thither, and all the port,  
One furnace of confusion, heaved and seethed  
In terror; for each shadow of the night,  
Nay, the great night itself, was all *El Draque*.  
The Dragon's wings were spread from quay to quay,  
The very lights that burnt from mast to mast  
And flared across the tide kindled his breath  
To fire; while here and there a British pinnace  
Slipped softly thro' the roaring gloom and glare,  
Ransacking ship by ship; for each one thought  
A fleet had come upon them. Each gave up  
The struggle as each was boarded; while, elsewhere,  
Cannon to cannon, friends bombarded friends.

Yet not one ounce of treasure in Callao  
They found; for, fourteen days before they came,  
That greatest treasure-ship of Spain, with all  
The gorgeous harvest of that year, had sailed  
For Panama: her ballast—silver bars;  
Her cargo—rubies, emeralds, and gold.

Out through the clamour and the darkness, out,  
Out to the harbour mouth, the *Golden Hynde*,  
Steered by the iron soul of Drake, returned:  
And where the way was blocked, her cannon clove  
A crimson highway to the midnight sea.  
Then Northward, Northward, o'er the jewelled main,

Under the white moon like a storm they drove  
 In quest of the *Cacafuego*. Fourteen days  
 Her start was ; and at dawn the fair wind sank,  
 And chafing lay the *Golden Hynde*, becalmed ;  
 While, on the hills, the Viceroy of Peru  
 Marched down from Lima with two thousand men,  
 And sent out four huge ships of war to sink  
 Or capture the fierce Dragon. Loud laughed Drake  
 To see them creeping nigh, urged with great oars,  
 Then suddenly pause ; for none would be the first  
 To close with him. And, ere they had steeled their hearts  
 To battle, a fair breeze broke out anew,  
 And Northward sped the little *Golden Hynde*  
 In quest of the lordliest treasure-ship of Spain.

Behind her lay a world in arms ; for now  
 Wrath and confusion clamoured for revenge  
 From sea to sea. Spain claimed the pirate's head  
 From England, and awaited his return  
 With all her tortures. And where'er he passed  
 He sowed the dragon's teeth, and everywhere  
 Cadmean broods of armed men arose  
 And followed, followed on his fiery trail.  
 Men toiled at Lima to fit out a fleet  
 Grim enough to destroy him. All night long  
 The flare went up from cities on the coast  
 Where men like naked devils toiled to cast  
 Cannon that might have overwhelmed the powers  
 Of Michael when he drave that hideous rout  
 Through livid chaos to the black abyss.  
 Small hope indeed there seemed of safe return ;  
 But Northward sped the little *Golden Hynde*,  
 The world-watched midget ship of eighteen guns,  
 Undaunted ; and upon the second dawn  
 Sighted a galleon, not indeed the chase,  
 Yet worth a pause ; for out of her they took—  
 Embossed with emeralds large as pigeon's eggs—  
 A golden crucifix, with eighty pounds

In weight of gold. The rest they left behind ;  
And onward, onward, to the North they flew—  
A score of golden miles, a score of green,  
An hundred miles, eight hundred miles of foam,  
Rainbows and fire, ransacking as they went  
Ship after ship for news o' the chase and gold ;  
Learning from every capture that they drew  
Nearer and nearer. At Truxillo, dim  
And dreaming city, a-drowse with purple flowers,  
She had paused, ay, paused to take a freight of gold !  
At Paita—she had passed two days in front,  
Only two days, two days ahead ; nay, one !  
At Quito, close inshore, a youthful page,  
Bright-eyed, ran up the rigging and cried, " A sail !  
A sail ! The *Cacafuego* ! And the chain  
Is mine ! " And by the strange cut of her sails,  
Whereof they had been told in Callao,  
They knew her !

Heavily laden with her gems,  
Lazily drifting with her golden fruitage,  
Over the magic seas they saw her hull  
Loom as they onward drew ; but Drake, for fear  
The prey might take alarm and run ashore,  
Trailed wine-skins, filled with water, o'er the side  
To hold his ship back, till the darkness fell,  
And with the night the off-shore wind arose.  
At last the sun sank down, the rosy light  
Faded from Andes' peaked and bosomed snow :  
The night-wind rose : the wine-skins were up-hauled ;  
And, like a hound unleashed, the *Golden Hynde*  
Leapt forward thro' the gloom.

A cable's length  
Divided them. The *Cacafuego* heard  
A rough voice in the darkness bidding her  
*Heave to !* She held her course. Drake gave the word.  
A broadside shattered the night, and over her side  
Her main-yard clattered like a broken wing !

On to her decks the British sea-dogs swarmed,  
Cutlass in hand : that fight was at an end.

The ship was cleared, a prize crew placed on board,  
Then both ships turned their heads to the open sea.  
At dawn, being out of sight of land, they 'gan  
Examine the great prize. None ever knew  
Save Drake and Gloriana what wild wealth  
They had captured there. Thus much at least was  
known :

An hundredweight of gold, and twenty tons  
Of silver bullion ; thirteen chests of coins ;  
Nuggets of gold unnumbered ; countless pearls,  
Diamonds, and emeralds ; but the worth of these  
Was past all reckoning. In the crimson dawn,  
Ringed with the lonely pomp of sea and sky,  
The naked-footed seamen bathed knee-deep  
In gold and gathered up Aladdin's fruit—  
All-coloured gems—and tossed them in the sun.  
The hold like one great elfin orchard gleamed  
With dusky globes and tawny glories piled,  
Hesperian apples, heap on mellow heap,  
Rich with the hues of sunset, rich and ripe  
And ready for the enchanted cider-press ;  
An Emperor's ransom in each burning orb ;  
A kingdom's purchase in each clustered bough ;  
The freedom of all slaves in every chain.

## BOOK VI.

Now like the soul of Ophir on the sea  
Glittered the *Golden Hynde*, and all her heart  
Turned home to England. As a child that finds  
A ruby ring upon the highway, straight  
Homeward desires to run with it, so she  
Yearned for her home and country. Yet the world  
Was all in arms behind her. Fleet on fleet  
Awaited her return. Along the coast  
The very churches melted down their chimes  
And cast them into cannon. To the South  
A thousand cannon watched Magellan's straits,  
And fleets were scouring all the sea like hounds,  
With orders that where'er they came on Drake,  
Although he were the Dragon of their dreams,  
They should out-blast his thunders and convey,  
Dead or alive, his body back to Spain.

And Drake laughed out and said, "My trusty lads  
Of Devon, you have made the wide world ring  
With England's name; you have swept one half the seas  
From sky to sky; and in our oaken hold  
You have packed the gorgeous Indies." We shall sail  
But slowly with such wealth. If we return,  
We are one against ten thousand! We will seek  
The fabled Northern passage, take our gold  
Safe home; then out to sea again and try  
Our guns against their guns."

. . . . .

And as they sailed  
 Northward, they swooped on warm blue Guatulco  
 For food and water. Nigh the dreaming port  
 The grand alcaides in high conclave sat,  
 Blazing with gold and scarlet, as they tried  
 A batch of negro slaves upon the charge  
 Of idleness in Spanish mines ; dumb slaves,  
 With bare scarred backs and labour-broken knees,  
 And sorrowful eyes like those of wearied kine  
 Spent from the ploughing. Even as the judge  
 Rose to condemn them to the knotted lash  
 The British boat's crew, quiet and compact,  
 Entered the court. The grim judicial glare  
 Grew wider with amazement, and the judge  
 Staggered against his gilded throne.

"I thank  
 Almighty God," cried Drake, "who hath given me this  
 —That I who once, in ignorance, procured  
 Slaves for the golden bawdy-house of Spain,  
 May now, in England's name, help to requite  
 That wrong. For now I say in England's name,  
 Where'er her standard flies, the slave shall stand  
 Upright, the shackles fall from off his limbs.  
 Unyoke the prisoners : tell them they are men  
 Once more, not beasts of burden. Set them free ;  
 But take these gold and scarlet popinjays  
 Aboard my *Golden Hynde* ; and let them write  
 An order that their town shall now provide  
 My boats with food and water."

This being done,  
 The slaves being placed in safety on the prize,  
 The *Golden Hynde* revictualled and the casks  
 Replenished with fresh water, Drake set free  
 The judges and swept Northward once again ;  
 And, off the coast of Nicaragua, found  
 A sudden treasure better than all gold ;  
 For on the track of the China trade they caught  
 A ship whereon two China pilots sailed,

And in their cabin lay the secret charts,  
Red hieroglyphs of Empire, unknown charts  
Of silken sea-roads down the golden West  
Where all roads meet and East and West are one.  
And, with that mystery stirring in their hearts  
Like a strange cry from home, Northward they swept  
And Northward, till the soft luxurious coasts  
Hardened, the winds grew bleak, the great green waves  
Loomed high like mountains round them, and the spray  
Froze on their spars and yards. Fresh from the warmth  
Of tropic seas the men could hardly brook  
That cold ; and when the floating hills of ice  
Like huge green shadows crowned with ghostly snow  
Went past them with strange whispers in the gloom,  
Or took mysterious colours in the dawn,  
Their hearts misgave them, and they found no way ;  
But all was iron shore and icy sea.  
And one by one the crew fell sick to death  
In that fierce winter, and the land still ran  
Westward and showed no passage. Tossed with storms,  
Onward they plunged, or furrowed gentler tides  
Of ice-lit emerald that made the prow  
A faery beak of some enchanted ship  
Flinging wild rainbows round her as she drove  
Thro' seas unsailed by mortal mariners,  
Past isles unhailed of any human voice,  
Where sound and silence mingled in one song  
Or utter solitude. Ever as they went  
The flag of England blazoned the broad breeze,  
Northward, where never ship had sailed before,  
Northward, till lost in helpless wonderment,  
Dazed as a soul awakening from the dream  
Of death to some wild dawn in Paradise  
(Yet burnt with cold as they whose very tears  
Freeze on their faces where Cocytus wails)  
All world-worn, bruised, wing-broken, wracked, and  
wrenched,  
Blackened with lightning, scarred as with evil deeds,



But all embalmed in beauty by that sun  
Which never sets, bosomed in peace at last  
The *Golden Hynde* rocked on a glittering calm.  
Seas that no ship had ever sailed, from sky  
To glistening sky, swept round them. Glory and gleam,  
Glamour and lucid rapture and diamond air  
Embraced her broken spars, begrimed with gold  
Her gloomy hull, rocking upon a sphere  
New made, it seemed, mysterious with the first  
Mystery of the world, where holy sky  
And sacred sea shone like the primal Light  
Of God, a-stir with whispering sea-bird's wings  
And glorious with clouds. Only, all day,  
All night, the rhythmic utterance of His will  
In the deep sigh of seas, that washed His throne,  
Rose and relapsed across Eternity,  
Timed to the pulse of æons. All their world  
Seemed strange as unto us the great new heavens  
And glittering shores, if on some aery bark  
To Saturn's coasts we came and traced no more  
The tiny gleam of our familiar earth  
Far off, but heard tremendous oceans roll  
Round unimagined continents, and saw  
Terrible mountains unto which our Alps  
Were less than mole-hills, and such gaunt ravines  
Cleaving them and such cataracts roaring down  
As burst the gates of our earth-moulded senses,  
Pour the eternal glory on our souls,  
And, while ten thousand chariots bring the dawn,  
Hurl us poor midgets trembling to our knees.  
Glory and glamour and rapture of lucid air,  
Ice cold, with subtle colours of the sky  
Embraced her broken spars, belted her hulk  
With brilliance, while she dipped her jacinth beak  
In waves of mounded splendour, and sometimes  
A great ice-mountain flashed and floated by  
Throned on the waters, pinnacled and crowned  
With all the smouldering jewels in the world;

Or in the darkness, glimmering berg on berg,  
 All emerald to the moon, went by like ghosts  
 Whispering to the South.

There, as they lay,  
 Waiting a wind to fill the stiffened sails,  
 Their hearts remembered that in England now  
 The Spring was nigh, and in that lonely sea  
 The skilled musicians filled their eyes with home

### SONG.

#### I.

*It is the Spring-tide now !  
 Under the hawthorn-bough  
 The milkmaid goes :  
 Her eyes are violets blue  
 Washed with the morning dew,  
 Her mouth a rose.  
 It is the Spring-tide now.*

#### II.

*The lanes are growing sweet,  
 The lambkins frisk and bleat  
 In all the meadows :  
 The glossy dappled kine  
 Blink in the warm sunshine,  
 Cooling their shadows.  
 It is the Spring-tide now.*

#### III.

*Soon hand in sunburnt hand  
 Thro' God's green fairyland,  
 England, our home,*

*Whispering as they stray  
Adown the primrose way,  
Lovers will roam.  
It is the Spring-tide now.*

And then, with many a chain of linkéd sweetness,  
Harmonious gold, they drew their hearts and souls  
Back, back to England, thoughts of wife and child,  
Mother and sweetheart and the old companions,  
The twisted streets of London and the deep  
Delight of Devon lanes, all softly voiced  
In words of cadences, made them breathe hard  
And gaze across the everlasting sea,  
Craving for that small isle so far away.

## SONG.

## I.

*O, you beautiful land,  
Deep-bosomed with beeches and bright  
With the flowery largesse of May  
Sweet from the palm of her hand  
Out-flung, till the hedges grew white  
As the green-arched billows with spray.*

## II.

White from the fall of her feet  
The daisies awake in the sun !  
Cliff-side and valley and plain  
With the breath of the thyme growing sweet  
Laugh, for the Spring is begun ;  
And Love hath turned homeward again.

*O, you beautiful land ! &c.*

## III.

Where should the home be of Love,  
But there, where the hawthorn-tree blows,  
And the milkmaid trips out with her pail  
And the skylark in heaven above  
Sings, till the West is a rose  
And the East is a nightingale?  
*O, you beautiful land ! &c.*

## IV.

There where the sycamore trees  
Are shading the satin-skinned kine,  
And oaks, whose brethren of old  
Conquered the strength of the seas,  
Grow broad in the sunlight and shine  
Crowned with their cressets of gold ;  
*O, you beautiful land ! &c.*

## V.

Deep-bosomed with beeches and bright  
With rose-coloured cloudlets above ;  
Billowing broad and grand  
Where the meadows with blossom are white  
For the foot-fall, the foot-fall of Love.  
*O, you beautiful land !*

## VI.

How should we sing of thy beauty,  
England, mother of men,  
We that can look in thine eyes  
And see there the splendour of duty  
Deep as the depth of their ken,  
Wide as the ring of thy skies.

## VII.

*O, you beautiful land,  
Deep-bosomed with beeches and bright  
With the flowery largesse of May  
Sweet from the palm of her hand  
Out-flung, till the hedges grew white  
As the green-arched billows with spray.  
O, you beautiful land !*

And when a fair wind rose again, there seemed  
No hope of passage by that fabled way  
Northward, and suddenly Drake put down his helm  
And, with some wondrous purpose in his eyes,  
Turned Southward once again, until he found  
A lonely natural harbour on the coast  
Near San Francisco, where the cliffs were white  
Like those of England, and the soft soil teemed  
With gold. There they careened the *Golden Hynde*—  
Her keel being thick with barnacles and weeds—  
And built a fort and dockyard to refit  
Their little wandering home, not half so large  
As many a coasting barque to-day that scarce  
Would cross the Channel, yet she had swept the seas  
Of half the world, and even now prepared  
For new adventures greater than them all.  
And as the sound of chisel and hammer broke  
The stillness of that shore, shy figures came,  
Keen-faced and grave-eyed Indians, from the woods  
To bow before the strange white-faced new-comers  
As gods. Whereat the chaplain much aghast  
Persuaded them with signs and broken words  
And grunts that even Drake was but a man,  
Whom none the less the savages would crown  
With woven flowers and barbarous ritual  
King of New Albion—so the seamen called  
That land, remembering the white cliffs of home;  
Much they implored, with many a sign and cry,

Which by the rescued slaves upon the prize  
 Were part interpreted, that Drake would stay  
 And rule them ; and the vision of the great  
 Empire of Englishmen arose and flashed  
 A moment round them, on that lonely shore.  
 A small and weather-beaten band they stood,  
 Bronzed seamen by the laughing rescued slaves,  
 Ringed with gigantic loneliness and saw  
 An Empire that should liberate the world ;  
 A Power before the lightning of whose arms  
 Darkness should die and all oppression cease ;  
 A Federation of the strong and weak,  
 Whereby the weak were strengthened and the strong  
 Made stronger in the increasing good of all ;  
 A gathering up of one another's loads ;  
 A turning of the wasteful rage of war  
 To accomplish large and fruitful tasks of peace,  
 Even as the strength of some great stream is turned  
 To grind the corn for bread. E'en thus on England  
 That splendour dawned which those in dreams foresaw  
 And saw not with their living eyes, but thou,  
 England, mayst lift up eyes at last and see,  
 Who, like that angel of the Apocalypse  
 Hast set one foot upon thy sea-girt isle,  
 The other upon the waters, and canst raise  
 Now, if thou wilt, above the assembled nations,  
 The trumpet of deliverance to thy lips.

At last their task was done, the *Golden Hynde*  
 Undocked, her white wings hoisted ; and away  
 Westward they swiftly glided from that shore  
 Where, with a wild lament, their Indian friends,  
 Knee-deep i' the creaming foam, all stood at gaze,  
 Like men that for one moment in their lives  
 Have seen a mighty drama cross their path  
 And played upon the stage of vast events  
 Knowing, henceforward, all their life is nought.  
 But Westward sped the little *Golden Hynde*

Across the uncharted ocean, with no guide  
 But that great homing cry of all their hearts.  
 Far out of sight of land they steered, straight out  
 Across the great Pacific, in those days  
 When even the compass proved no trusty guide,  
 Straight out they struck in that small bark, straight out  
 Week after week, without one glimpse of aught  
 But heaving seas, across the uncharted waste  
 Straight to the sunset. Laughingly they sailed,  
 With all that gorgeous booty in their holds,  
 A splendour dragging deep through seas of doom,  
 A prey to the first great hurricane that blew  
 Except their God averted it. And still  
 Their skilled musicians cheered the way along  
 To shores beyond the sunset and the sea.  
 And oft at nights, the yellow fo'c'sle lanthorn  
 Swung over swarthy singing faces grouped  
 Within the four small wooden walls that made  
 Their home and shut them from the unfathomable  
 Depths of mysterious gloom without that rolled  
 All round them ; or Tom Moone would heartily troll  
 A simple stave that struggled oft with thoughts  
 Beyond its reach, yet reached their hearts no less.

## SONG.

## I.

*Good luck befall you, mariners all  
 That sail this world so wide !  
 Whither we go, not yet we know :  
 We steer by wind and tide.  
 Be it right or wrong, I sing this song ;  
 For now it seems to me  
 Men steer their souls thro' rocks and shoals  
 As mariners use by sea.*

Chorus : *As mariners use by sea,  
 My lads,  
 As mariners use by sea !*

## II.

*And now they plough to windward, now  
 They drive before the gale !  
 Now are they hurled across the world  
 With torn and tattered sail ;  
 Yet, as they will, they steer and still  
 Defy the world's rude glee :  
 Till death o'erwhelm them, mast and helm,  
 They ride and rule the sea.*

Chorus : *They ride and rule the sea,  
 My lads,  
 They ride and rule the sea !*

Meantime, in England, Bess of Sydenham,  
 Drake's love and queen, being told that Drake was dead,  
 And numbed with grief, obeying her father's will  
 That dreadful summer morn in bridal robes  
 Had passed to wed her father's choice. The sun  
 Streamed smiling on her as she went, half-dazed,  
 Amidst her smiling maids. Nigh to the sea  
 The church was, and the mellow marriage bells  
 Mixed with its music. Far away, white sails  
 Spangled the sapphire, white as flying blossoms  
 New-fallen from her crown ; but as the glad  
 And sad procession neared the little church,  
 From some strange ship-of-war, far out at sea,  
 There came a sudden tiny puff of smoke—  
 And then a dull strange throb, a whistling hiss,  
 And scarce a score of yards away a shot  
 Ploughed up the turf. None knew, none ever knew  
 From whence it came, whether a perilous jest  
 Of English seamen, or a wanton deed  
 Of Spaniards, or mere accident ; but all  
 Her maids in flight were scattered. Bess awoke  
 As from a dream, crying aloud—" 'Tis he,  
 'Tis he that sends this message. He is not dead.



I will not pass the porch. Nay, take me home,  
'Twas he that sent that message."

Nought availed,  
Her father's wrath, her mother's tears, her maids'  
Cunning persuasions, nought ; home she returned,  
And waited for the dead to come to life ;  
Nor waited long ; for ere that month was out,  
Rumour on rumour reached the coasts of England,  
Borne as it seemed on sea-birds' wings, that Drake  
Was on his homeward way.

## BOOK VII.

THE imperial wrath of Spain, one world-wide sea  
 Of furious pomp and flouted power, now surged  
 All round this little isle, with one harsh roar  
 Deepening for Drake's return—"The *Golden Hynde*  
 Ye swore had foundered, Drake ye swore was drowned,  
 They are on their homeward way! The head of Drake!  
 What answer, what account, what recompense  
 Now can ye yield our might invincible  
 Except the head of Drake, whose bloody deeds  
 Have reddened the Pacific, who hath sacked  
 Cities of gold, burnt fleets, and ruined realms,  
 What answer but his life?"

To which the Queen  
 Who saw the storm of Europe slowly rising  
 In awful menace o'er her wave-beat throne,  
 And midmost of the storm, the ensanguined robes  
 Of Rome and murderous hand, grasping the Cross  
 By its great hilt, pointing it like a brand  
 Blood-blackened at the throat of England, saw  
 Like skeleton castles wrapt in rolling mist  
 The monstrous engines and designs of war,  
 The secret fleets and brooding panoplies  
 Philip prepared, growing from day to day  
 In dusk armipotent and embattled gloom  
 Surrounding her, replied: "The life of Drake,  
 If, on our strict enquiry, in due order  
 We find that Drake have hurt our friends, mark well,  
 If Drake have hurt our friends, the life of Drake."

And while the world awaited him, as men  
Might wait an earthquake, quietly one grey morn,  
One grey October morn of mist and rain  
When all the window-panes in Plymouth dripped  
With listless drizzle, and only through her streets  
Rumbled the death-cart with its dreary bell  
Monotonously plangent (for the plague  
Had lately like a vampire sucked the veins  
Of Plymouth town), a little weed-clogged ship,  
Grey as a ghost, glided into the Sound  
And anchored, scarce a soul to see her come,  
And not an eye to read the faded scroll  
Around her battered prow—the *Golden Hynde*.  
Then, thro' the dumb grey misty listless port,  
A rumour like the colours of the dawn  
Streamed o'er the shining quays, up the wet streets,  
In at the tavern doors, flashed from the panes  
And turned them into diamonds, fired the pools  
In every muddy lane with Spanish gold,  
Flushed in a thousand faces, Drake is come !  
Down every crowding alley the urchins leaped  
Tossing their caps, the *Golden Hynde* is come !  
Fisherman, citizen, prentice, dame and maid,  
Fat justice, floury baker, bloated butcher,  
Fishwife, minister and apothecary,  
Yea, even the driver of the death-cart, leaving  
His ghastly load, using his dreary bell  
To merrier purpose, down the seething streets,  
Panting, tumbling, jostling, helter-skelter  
To the water-side, to the water-side they rushed,  
And some knee-deep beyond it, all one wild  
Welcome to Francis Drake !  
Wild kerchiefs fluttering, thunderous hurrahs  
Rolling from quay to quay, a thousand arms  
Outstretched to that grey ghostly little ship  
At whose masthead the British flag still flew ;  
Then, over all, in one tumultuous tide  
Of pealing joy, the Plymouth bells outclashed  
A nation's welcome home to Francis Drake.

The very *Golden Hynde*, no idle dream,  
The little ship that swept the Spanish Main,  
Carelessly lying there, in Plymouth Sound,  
The *Golden Hynde*, the wonder of the world,  
A glory wrapt her greyness, and no boat  
Dared yet approach, save one, with Drake's close friends,  
Who came to warn him : " England stands alone  
And Drake is made the price of England's peace.  
The Queen, perforce, must temporise with Spain,  
The Invincible ! She hath forfeited thy life  
To Spain, against her will. Only by this  
Rejection of thee as a privateer  
She averted instant war ; for now the menace  
Of Spain draws nigher, looms darker every hour.  
The world is made Spain's footstool. Philip, the King,  
E'en now hath added to her boundless power  
Without a blow, the vast domains and wealth  
Of Portugal, and deadlier yet, a coast  
That crouches over against us. Cadiz holds  
A huge Armada, none knows where to strike ;  
And even this day a flying horseman brought  
Rumours that Spain hath landed a great force  
In Ireland. Mary of Scotland only waits  
The word to stab us in the side for Rome.  
The Queen, weighed down by Burleigh and the friends  
Of peace at any cost, may yet be driven  
To make thy life our ransom, which indeed  
She hath already sworn, or seemed to swear."

To whom Drake answered, " Gloriana lives ;  
And in her life mine only fear lies dead,  
Mine only fear, for England, not myself.  
Willing am I and glad, as I have lived,  
To die for England's sake.  
Yet, lest the Queen be driven now to restore  
This cargo that I bring her—a world's wealth,  
The golden springs of all the power of Spain,  
The jewelled hearts of all those cruel realms

(For I have plucked them out) beyond the sea ;  
 Lest she be driven to yield them up again  
 For Rome and Rome's delight, I will warp out  
 Behind St Nicholas' Island. The fierce plague  
 In Plymouth shall be colour and excuse,  
 Until my courier return from court  
 With Gloriana's will. If it be death,  
 I'll out again to sea, strew its rough floor  
 With costlier largesses than kings can throw,  
 And, ere I die, will singe the Spaniard's beard  
 And set the fringe of his imperial robe  
 Blazing along his coasts. Then let him roll  
 His galleons round the little *Golden Hynde*,  
 Bring her to bay, if he can, on the high seas,  
 Ring us about with thousands, we'll not yield,  
 I and my *Golden Hynde*, we will go down,  
 With flag still flying on the last stump left us  
 And all my cannon spitting out the fires  
 Of everlasting scorn into his face."

So Drake warped out the *Golden Hynde* anew  
 Behind St Nicholas' Island. She lay there,  
 The small grey-golden centre of the world  
 That raged all round her, the last hope, the star  
 Of Protestant freedom, she, the outlawed ship  
 Holding within her the great head and heart  
 Of England's ocean power ; and all the fleets  
 That have enfranchised earth, in that small ship,  
 Lay waiting for their doom.

Past her at night  
 Fisher-boats glided, wondering as they heard  
 In the thick darkness the great songs they deemed  
 Must oft have risen from many a lonely sea ;  
 For oft had Spaniards brought a rumour back  
 Of that strange pirate who in royal state  
 Sailed to a sound of violins, and dined  
 With skilled musicians round him, turning all  
 Battle and storm and death into a song.

## SONG.

The same Sun is o'er us,  
The same Love shall find us,  
The same and none other  
Wherever we be ;  
With the same hope before us,  
The same home behind us,  
England, our mother,  
Ringed round with the sea.

No land in the ring of it  
Now, all around us  
Only the splendid  
Re-surg'ing unknown ;  
How should we sing of it,  
This that hath found us  
By the great stars attended  
At midnight, alone ?

Our highway none knoweth,  
Yet our blood hath discerned it !  
Clear, clear is our path now  
Whose foreheads are free  
Where the hurricane bloweth  
Our spirits have learned it,  
'Tis the highway of wrath, now,  
The storm's way, the sea.

When the waters lay breathless  
Gazing at Hesper  
Guarding that glorious  
Fruitage of gold,  
Heard we the deathless  
Wonderful whisper  
We follow, victorious  
To-night, as of old.

Ah, the broad miles of it  
White with the onset  
Of waves without number  
Warring for glee ;  
Ah, the soft smiles of it  
Down to the sunset,  
Sacred for slumber  
The swan's bath, the sea !

When the breakers charged thundering  
In thousands all round us  
With a lightning of lances  
Up-hurtled on high,  
When the stout ships were Sundering  
A rapture hath crowned us  
Like the wild light that dances  
On the crests that flash by.

*Our highway none knoweth,  
Yet our blood hath discerned it !  
Clear, clear is our path now  
Whose foreheads are free,  
Where Euroclydon bloweth  
Our spirits have learned it,  
'Tis the highway of wrath, now,  
The storm's way, the sea !*

Who now will follow us  
Where England's flag leadeth us,  
Where gold not inveigles,  
Nor statesmen betray ?  
Tho' the deep midnight swallow us  
Let her cry when she needeth us,  
We return, her sea-eagles,  
The hurricane's way.

*For the same Sun is o'er us,  
 The same Love shall find us,  
 The same and none other  
 Wherever we be ;  
 With the same hope before us,  
 The same home behind us,  
 England, our mother,  
 Ringed round with the sea.*

So six days passed, and on the seventh returned  
 The courier, with a message from the Queen  
 Summoning Drake to court, bidding him bring  
 Also such curious trifles of his voyage  
 As might amuse her, also be of good cheer  
 She bade him, and rest well content his life  
 In Gloriana's hands were safe : so Drake  
 Laughingly landed with his war-bronzed crew  
 Amid the wide-eyed throng on Plymouth beach  
 And loaded twelve big pack-horses with pearls  
 Beyond all price, diamonds, crosses of gold,  
 Rubies that smouldered once for Aztec kings,  
 And great dead Incas' gem-encrusted crowns.  
 Also, he said, we'll add a sack or twain  
 Of gold doubloons, pieces of eight, moidores,  
 And such-like Spanish trash, for those poor lords  
 At court, lilies that toil not neither spin,  
 Wherefore, methinks their purses oft grow lean  
 In these harsh times. 'Twere even as well their tongues  
 Wagged in our favour, now, as in our blame.

Six days thereafter a fearful whisper reached  
 Mendoza, plenipotentiary of Spain  
 In London, that the piratè Drake was now  
 In secret conference with the Queen, nay more,  
 That he, the Master-thief of the golden world,  
 Drake, even he, that bloody buccaneer,  
 Had six hours' audience with her Majesty  
 Daily, nay more, walked with her in her garden



Alone, among the fiery Autumn leaves,  
 Talking of God knows what, and suddenly  
 The temporizing diplomatic voice  
 Of caution he was wont to expect from England  
 And blandly accept as his imperial due  
 Changed to a ringing key of firm resolve,  
 Resistance, nay, defiance. For when he came  
 Demanding audience of the Queen, behold,  
 Her officers of state with mouths awry  
 Informed the high ambassador of Spain,  
 Despite his pomp and circumstance, the Queen  
 Could not receive him, being in conference  
 With some rough seaman, pirate, what you will,  
 A fellow made of bronze, a buccaneer,  
 Maned like a lion, bearded like a pard,  
 With hammered head, clamped jaws, and great deep eyes  
 That burned with fierce blue colours of the brine,  
 And liked not Spain—Drake! 'Twas the very name,  
 One Francis Drake! a Titan that had stood,  
 Thundering commands against the thundering heavens,  
 On lightning-shattered, storm-swept decks and drunk  
 Great draughts of glory from the rolling sea,  
 El Draque! El Draque! Nor could she promise aught  
 To Spain's ambassador, nor see his face  
 Again, while yet one Spanish musketeer  
 Remained in Ireland.

Vainly the Spaniard raged  
 Of restitution, recompense; for now  
 Had Drake brought up the little *Golden Hynde*  
 To London, and the rumour of her wealth  
 Out-topped the wild reality. The crew  
 Were princes as they swaggered down the streets  
 In weather-beaten splendour. Out of their doors  
 To wonder and stare the jostling citizens ran  
 When They went by; and through the length and breadth  
 Of England, now, the gathering glory of life  
 Shone like the dawn. O'er hill and dale it streamed,  
 Dawn, everlasting and almighty dawn,

Making a golden pomp of every oak—  
Had not its British brethren swept the seas?—  
In each remotest hamlet, by the hearth,  
The cart, the grey church-porch, the village pump  
By meadow and mill and old manorial hall,  
By turnpike and by tavern, farm and forge,  
Men staved the crimson vintage of romance  
And held it up against the light and drank it,  
And with it drank confusion to the wrath  
That menaced England, but eternal honour,  
While blood ran in their veins, to Francis Drake.

## BOOK VIII.

MEANWHILE, young Bess of Sydenham, the queen  
Of Drake's deep heart, imprisoned in her home,  
Fenced by her father's angry watch and ward  
Lest he—the poor plebeian dread of Spain,  
Shaker of nations, king of the untamed seas—  
Might win some word with her, sweet Bess, the flower  
Triumphant o'er their rusty heraldries,  
Waited her lover, as in ancient tales  
The pale princess from some grey wizard's tower  
Midmost the deep sigh of enchanted woods  
Looks for the starry flash of her knight's shield;  
Or on the further side o' the magic West  
Sees pushing through the ethereal golden gloom  
Some blurred black prow, with loaded colours coarse,  
Clouded with sunsets of a mortal sea,  
And rich with earthly crimson. She, with lips  
Apart, still waits the shattering golden thrill  
When it shall grate the coasts of Fairyland.

Only, to Bess of Sydenham, there came  
No sight or sound to break that frozen spell  
And lonely watch, no message from her love,  
Or none that reached her restless helpless hands.  
Only the general rumour of the world  
Borne to her by the gossip of her maid  
Kept the swift pictures passing through her brain  
Of how the *Golden Hynde* was hauled ashore  
At Deptford through a sea of exultation,

And by the Queen's command was now set up  
For an everlasting memory !  
Of how the Queen with subtle statecraft still  
Kept Spain at arm's-length, dangling, while she played  
At fast and loose with France, whose embassy,  
Arriving with the marriage-treaty, found  
(And trembled at her daring, since the wrath  
Of Spain seemed, in their eyes, to flake with foam  
The storm-beat hulk) a gorgeous banquet spread  
To greet them on that very *Golden Hynde*  
Which sacked the Spanish main, a gorgeous feast,  
The like of which old England had not seen  
Since the bluff days of boisterous King Hal,  
Great shields of brawn with mustard, roasted swans,  
Haunches of venison, roasted chines of beef,  
And chewets baked, big olive-pyes thereto,  
And sallets mixed with sugar and cinnamon,  
White wine, rose-water, and candied eringoes.  
There, on the outlawed ship, whose very name  
Rang like a blasphemy in the imperial ears  
Of Spain (its every old worm-eaten plank  
Being scored with scorn and courage that not storm  
Nor death, nor all their Inquisition racks,  
The white-hot irons and bloody branding whips  
That scarred the backs of Rome's pale galley-slaves,  
Her captured English seamen, ever could daunt),  
There with huge Empires waiting for one word,  
One breath of colour and excuse, to leap  
Like wolves at the naked throat of her small isle,  
There in the eyes of the staggered world she stood,  
Great Gloriana, while the live decks reeled  
With flash of jewels and flush of rustling silks,  
She stood with Drake, the corsair, and her people  
Surged like a sea around. There did she give  
Open defiance with her agate smile  
To Spain. "Behold this pirate, now," she cried,  
"Whose head my Lord, the Invincible, Philip of Spain  
Demands from England. Kneel down, master Drake,

Kneel down ; for now have I this gilded sword  
 Wherewith to strike it off. Nay, thou my lord  
 Ambassador of France, since I be woman,  
 And squeamish at the sight of blood, give thou  
 The accolade. With that jest she gave the hilt  
 (Thus, even in boldness, playing a crafty part,  
 And dangling France before the adventurous deed)  
 To Marchaumont ; and in the face of Europe,  
 With that huge fleet in Cadiz and the whole  
 World-power of Spain crouching around her isle,  
 Knighted the master-thief of the unknown world,  
 Sir Francis Drake.

And then the rumour came  
 Of vaster privateerings planned by Drake  
 Against the coasts of Philip ; but held in check  
 And fretting at the leash, as ever the Queen  
 Clung to her state-craft, while Drake's enemies  
 Worked in the dark against him. Spain had set  
 An emperor's ransom on his life. At home  
 John Doughty, treacherous brother of that traitor  
 Who met his doom by Drake's own hand, intrigued  
 With Spain abroad and Spain's dark emissaries  
 At home to avenge his brother. Burleigh still  
 Beset Drake's path with pitfalls : treacherous greed  
 For Spain's blood-money daggered all the dark  
 Around him, and John Doughty without cease  
 Sought to make use of all ; until, by chance,  
 Drake gat the proof of treasonable intrigue  
 With Spain, against him, up to the deadly hilt,  
 And hurled him into the Tower.

Many a night  
 She sat by that old casement nigh the sea  
 And heard its ebb and flow. With soul erect  
 And splendid now she waited, yet there came  
 No message ; and, she thought, he hath seen at last  
 My little worth. And when her maiden sang,  
 With white throat throbbing softly in the dusk  
 And fingers gently straying o'er the lute,

As was her wont at twilight, some old song  
 Of high disdainful queens and lovers pale  
 Pining a thousand years before their feet,  
 She thought, "O, if my lover loved me yet  
 My heart would break for joy to welcome him :  
 Perchance his true pride will not let him come  
 Since false pride barred him out"; and yet again  
 She burned with shame, thinking, "to him such pride  
 Were matter for a jest. Ah no, he hath seen  
 My little worth." Even so, one night she sat,  
 One dark rich summer night, thinking him far  
 Away, wrapped in the multitudinous cares  
 Of one that seemed the steersman of the State  
 Now, thro' the storm of Europe; while her maid  
 Sang to the lute, and soft sea-breezes brought  
 Wreathed scents and sighs of secret waves and flowers  
 Warm through the casement's muffling jasmine bloom.

## SONG.

## I.

*Nymphs and naiads, come away,  
     Love lies dead !  
 Cover the cast-back golden head,  
 Cover the lovely limbs with may,  
     And with fairest boughs of green,  
 And many a rose-wreathed briar spray ;  
     But let no hateful yew be seen  
     Where Love lies dead.*

## II.

*Let not the quean that would not hear,  
     (Love lies dead !)  
 Or beauty that refused to save,  
     Exult in one dejected tear ;*

*But gather the glory of the year,  
 The pomp and glory of the year,  
 The triumphing glory of the year,  
 And softly, softly, softly shed  
 Its light and fragrance round the grave  
 Where Love lies dead.*

The song ceased. Far away the great sea slept,  
 And all was very still. Only hard by  
 One bird-throat poured its passion through the gloom,  
 And the whole night seemed breathlessly listening,  
 As though earth's fairies, at the moon's command,  
 Had muffled all the flower-bells in the world  
 That God might hear His nightingale.

A twig

Snapped, the song ceased, the intense dumb night was all  
 One passion of expectation—as if that song  
 Were prelude, and ere long the heavens and earth  
 Would burst into one great triumphant psalm.  
 The song ceased only as if that small bird-throat  
 Availed no further. Would the next great chord  
 Ring out from harps in flaming seraph hands  
 Ranged through the sky? The night watched, breathless,  
 dumb.

Bess listened. Once again a dry twig snapped  
 Beneath her casement, and a face looked up,  
 Draining her face of blood, of sight, of life,  
 Whispering, a voice from far beyond the stars,  
 Whispering, unutterable joy, the whole  
 Glory of life and death in one small word—  
*Sweetheart!*

The jasmine at her casement shook,  
 She knew no more than he was at her side,  
 His arms were round her, and his breath beat warm  
 Against her cheek.

. . . . .

Suddenly, nigh the house,  
 A deep-mouthed mastiff bayed and a foot crunched

The gravel. "Ah, hark ! they are watching for thee " she cried.

He laughed : there's half of Europe on the watch  
Outside for my poor head. 'Tis cosier here  
With thee ; but now "—his face grew grave, he drew  
A silken ladder from out his doublet—"quick,  
Before yon good gamekeeper rounds the house  
We must be down." And ere the words were out  
Bess reached the path, and Drake was at her side.  
Then into the star-stabbed shadow of the woods  
They sped, his arm around her. Suddenly  
She drew back with a cry, as four grim faces,  
With hand to forelock, glimmered in their way.  
Laughing she saw their storm-beat friendly smile  
Welcome their doughty captain in this new  
Adventure. Far away, once more they heard  
The mastiff bay ; then nearer, as if his nose  
Were down upon the trail ; and then a cry  
As of a hot pursuit. They reached the brook,  
Hurrying to the deep. Drake lifted Bess  
In his arms, and down the watery bed they splashed  
To baffle the clamouring hunt. Then out of the woods  
They came, on the seaward side, and Bess, with a shiver,  
Saw starlight flashing from bare cutlasses,  
As the mastiff bayed still nearer. Swiftlier now  
They passed along the bare blunt cliffs and saw  
The furrow ploughed by that strange cannon-shot  
Which saved this hour for Bess ; down to the beach  
And starry foam that churned the silver gravel  
Around an old black lurching boat, a strange  
Grim Charon's wherry for two lovers' flight,  
Guarded by old Tom Moone. Drake took her hand,  
And with one arm around her waist, her breath  
Warm on his cheek for a moment, in she stepped  
Daintily o'er the gunwale, and took her seat,  
His throned princess, beside him at the helm,  
Backed by the glittering waves, his throned princess,



With jewelled throat and glorious hair that seemed  
 Flashing back scents and colours to a sea  
 Which lived but to reflect her loveliness.

Then, all together, with their brandished oars  
 The seamen thrust as a heavy mounded wave  
 Lifted the boat ; and up the flowering breast  
 Of the next they soared, then settled at the thwarts,  
 And the fierce water boiled before their blades  
 While with Drake's iron hand upon the helm  
 They plunged and ploughed across the starlit seas  
 To where a small black lugger at anchor swung,  
 Dipping her rakish bows i' the liquid moon.  
 Small was she, but not fangless ; for Bess saw,  
 With half a tremor, the dumb protective grin  
 Of four grim guns above the tossing boat.  
 But ere his seamen or his sweetheart knew  
 What power, as of a wind, bore them along,  
 Anchor was up, the sails were broken out,  
 And as they scudded down the dim grey coast  
 Of a new enchanted world (for now had Love  
 Made all things new and strange) the skilled musicians  
 Upraised, at Drake's command, a song to cheer  
 Their midnight path across that faery sea.

### SONG.

#### I.

Sweet, what is love? 'Tis not the crown of kings,  
 Nay, nor the fire of white seraphic wings !  
 Is it a child's heart leaping while he sings ?  
     Even so say I ;  
     Even so say I.

## II.

Love like a child around our world doth run,  
Happy, happy, happy for all that God hath done,  
Glad of all the little leaves dancing in the sun,  
Even so say I;  
Even so say I.

## III.

Sweet, what is love? 'Tis not the burning bliss  
Angels know in heaven! God blows the world a kiss  
Wakes on earth a wild-rose! Ah, who knows not this?  
Even so say I;  
Even so say I.

## IV.

Love, love is kind! Can it be far away,  
Lost in a light that blinds our little day?  
Seems it a great thing? Sweetheart, answer nay;  
Even so say I;  
Even so say I.

## V.

Sweet, what is love? The dust beneath our feet,  
Whence breaks the rose and all the flowers that greet  
April and May with lips and heart so sweet;  
Even so say I;  
Even so say I.

## VI.

Love is the dust whence Eden grew so fair,  
Dust of the dust that set my lover there,  
Ay, and wrought the glorie of Eve's gold hair,  
Even so say I;  
Even so say I.

## VII.

Also the springing spray, the little topmost flower  
Swung by the bird that sings a little hour,  
Earth's climbing spray into the heaven's blue bower,  
Even so say I;  
Even so say I.

And stranger, ever stranger, grew the night  
Around those twain, for whom the fleecy moon  
Was but a mightier Cleopatra's pearl  
Dissolving in the rich dark wine of night,  
While 'mid the tenderer talk of eyes and hands  
And whispered nothings, his imperial dreams  
Rolled round their gloomy barge, robing its hulk  
With splendours Rome and Egypt never knew.  
Old ocean was his Nile, his mighty queen  
An English maiden purer than the dawn,  
His cause the cause of Freedom, his reward  
The glory of England. Strangely simple, then,  
Simple as life and death, anguish and love,  
To Bess appeared those mighty dawning dreams,  
Whereby he shaped the pageant of the world  
To a new purpose, strangely simple all  
Those great new waking tides i' the world's great soul  
That set towards the fall of tyranny  
Behind a thunderous roar of ocean triumph  
O'er burning ships and shattered fleets, while England  
Grasped with sure hands the sceptre of the sea,  
That untamed realm of Liberty which none  
Had looked upon as aught but wilderness  
Ere this, or even dreamed of as the seat  
Of power and judgment and high sovereignty  
Whereby all nations at the last should make  
One brotherhood, and war should be no more.  
And ever, as the vision broadened out,  
The sense of some tremendous change at hand,  
The approach of vast Armadas and the dawn

Of battle, reddening the diviner dawn  
With clouds, confused it, till once more the song  
Rang out triumphant o'er the glittering sea.

## SONG.

## I

*Ye that follow the vision  
Of the world's weal afar,  
Have ye met with derision  
And the red laugh of war ;  
Yet the thunder shall not hurt you,  
Nor the battle-storms dismay ;  
Tho' the sun in heaven desert you,  
"Love will find out the way."*

## II.

*When the pulse of hope falters,  
When the fire flickers low  
On your faith's crumbling altars,  
And the faithless gods go ;  
When the fond hope ye cherished  
Cometh, kissing, to betray ;  
When the last star hath perished,  
"Love will find out the way."*

## III.

*When the last dream bereaveth you,  
And the heart turns to stone,  
When the last comrade leaveth you  
In the desert, alone ;  
With the whole world before you  
Clad in battle-array,  
And the starless night o'er you,  
"Love will find out the way."*

## IV.

*Your dreamers may dream it  
 The shadow of a dream,  
 Your sages may deem it  
 A bubble on the stream ;  
 Yet our kingdom draweth nigher  
 With each dawn and every day,  
 Through the earthquake and the fire  
 "Love will find out the way."*

## V.

*Love will find it, tho' the nations  
 Rise up blind, as of old,  
 And the new generations  
 Wage their warfares of gold ;  
 Tho' they trample child and mother  
 As red clay into the clay,  
 Where brother wars with brother,  
 "Love will find out the way."*

Dawn, ever bearing some divine increase  
 Of beauty, love, and wisdom round the world,  
 Dawn, like a wild-rose in the fields of heaven  
 Washed grey with dew, awoke, and found the barque  
 At anchor in a little land-locked bay.  
 A crisp breeze blew, and all the living sea  
 Beneath the flower-soft colours of the sky,  
 Now like a myriad-petalled rose and now  
 Innumera-ly scalloped into shells  
 Of rosy fire, with dwindling wrinkles edged  
 Fainter and fainter to the unruffled glow  
 And soft white pallor of the distant deep,  
 Shone with a mystic beauty for those twain  
 Who watched the gathering glory ; and, in an hour,  
 Drake and sweet Bess, attended by a guard

Of four swart seamen, with bare cutlasses,  
And by the faithful eyes of old Tom Moone,  
Went up the rough rock-steps and twisted street  
O' the small white sparkling seaport, tow'rd the church  
Where, hand in hand, before God's altar they,  
With steadfast eyes, did plight eternal troth,  
And so were wedded. Never a chime of bells  
Had they ; but as they passed from out the porch  
Between the sleeping graves, a skylark soared  
Above the world in an ecstasy of song,  
And quivering heavenwards, lost himself in light.

## BOOK IX.

Now like a white-cliffed fortress England shone  
Amid the mirk of chaos ; for the huge  
Empire of Spain was but the dusky van  
Of that dread night beyond all nights and days,  
Night of the last corruption of a world  
Fast-bound in misery and iron, with chains  
Of priest and king and feudal servitude,  
Night of the fettered flesh and ravaged soul,  
Night of anarchic chaos, darkening the deep,  
Swallowing up cities, kingdoms, empires, gods,  
With vaster gloom approaching, till the sun  
Of love was blackened, the moon of faith was blood.  
All round our England, our small struggling star,  
Fortress of freedom, rock o' the world's desire,  
Bearing at last the hope of all mankind,  
The thickening darkness surged, and close at hand  
Those first fierce cloudy fringes of the storm,  
The Armada sails, gathered their might ; and Spain  
Crouched close behind them with her screaming fires  
And steaming shambles, Spain, the hell-hag, crouched,  
Still grasping with red hand the cross of Christ  
By its great hilt, pointing it like a dagger,  
Spear-head of the ultimate darkness, at the throat  
Of England. Under Philip's feet at last  
Writhed all the Protestant Netherlands, dim coasts  
Right over against us, whence his panoplies  
Might suddenly overwhelm our isle. But all night long,  
On many a mountain, many a guardian height,

From Beachy Head to Skiddaw, little groups  
Of seamen, torch and battle-lantern nigh,  
Watched by the brooding unlit beacons, piled  
Of furze and gorse, funereal peat, rough logs,  
Reeking with oil, 'mid sharp scents of the sea,  
Waste trampled grass and heather and close-cropped thyme,  
High o'er the thundering coast, among whose rocks  
Far, far below, the pacing coastguards gazed  
Steadfastly seaward through the loaded dusk.  
And through that deepening gloom when, as it seemed,  
All England held her breath in one grim doubt,  
Swift rumours flashed from North to South as runs  
The lightning round a silent thunder-cloud ;  
And there were muttering crowds i' the London streets,  
And hurrying feet i' the brooding Eastern ports.  
All night, dark inns, gathering the country-side,  
Reddened with clashing auguries of war.  
All night, i' the ships of Plymouth Sound, the soul  
Of Francis Drake was England, and all night  
Her singing seamen by the silver quays  
Polished their guns and waited for the dawn.

But hour by hour that night grew deeper. Spain  
Watched, cloud by cloud, her huge Armadas grow,  
Watched, tower by tower, and zone by zone, her fleets  
Grapple the sky with a hundred hands and drag  
Whole sea-horizons into her menacing ranks,  
Joining her powers to the fierce night, while Philip  
Still strove, with many a crafty word, to lull  
The fears of Gloriana, till his plots  
Were ripe, his armaments complete ; and still  
Great Gloriana took her woman's way,  
Preferring ever tortuous intrigue  
To battle, since the stakes had grown so great ;  
Now, more than ever, hoping against hope  
To find some subtler means of victory ;  
Yet not without swift impulses to strike,  
Swiftly recalled. Blind, yet not blind, she smiled



On Mary of Scotland waiting for her throne,  
 A throne with many a strange dark tremor thrilled  
 Now as the rumoured murderous mines below  
 Converged towards it, mine and counter mine,  
 Till the live earth was honeycombed with death.  
 Still with her agate smile, still she delayed,  
 Holding her pirate admiral in the leash,  
 Till Walsingham, nay, even the hunchback Burleigh,  
 That crafty king of statesmen, seeing at last  
 The inevitable thunder-crash at hand,  
 Grew heart-sick with delay and ached to shatter  
 The tense tremendous hush that seemed to oppress  
 All hearts, compress all brows, load the broad night  
 With more than mortal menace.

Only once

The night was traversed with one lightning flash,  
 One rapier stroke from England, at the heart  
 Of Spain, as swiftly parried, yet no less  
 A fiery challenge; for Philip's hate and scorn  
 Growing with his Armada's growth, he lured  
 With promises of just and friendly trade  
 A fleet of English corn-ships to relieve  
 His famine-stricken coast. There as they lay  
 Within his ports he seized them, one and all,  
 To fill the Armada's maw.

Whereat the Queen,  
 Passive so long, summoned great Walsingham,  
 And, still averse from open war, despite  
 The battle-hunger burning in his eyes,  
 With one strange swift sharp agate smile she hissed,  
 "Unchain *El Draque*!"

A lightning flash indeed  
 Was this; for he whose little *Golden Hynde*  
 With scarce a score of seamen late had scourged  
 The Spanish Main; he whose piratic neck  
 Scarcely the Queen's most wily statecraft saved  
 From Spain's revenge: he, privateer to the eyes  
 Of Spain, but England to all English hearts,

Gathered together, in all good jollity,  
 All help and furtherance himself could wish,  
 Before that moon was out, a pirate fleet  
 Whereof the like old ocean had not seen—  
 Eighteen swift cruisers, two great battleships,  
 With pinnaces and store-ships and a force  
 Of nigh three thousand men, wherewith to singe  
 The beard o' the King of Spain.

By night they gathered  
 In marvellous wind-whipt inns nigh Plymouth Sound,  
 Not secretly as, ere the *Golden Hynde*  
 Burst thro' the West, that small adventurous crew  
 Gathered beside the Thames, tossing the phrase  
 "Pieces of eight" from mouth to mouth, and singing  
 Great songs of the rich Indies, and those tall  
 Enchanted galleons, red with blood and gold,  
 Superb with rubies, glorious as clouds,  
 Clouds i' the sun, with mighty press of sail  
 Dragging the sunset out of the unknown world,  
 And staining all the grey old seas of Time  
 With rich romance; but these, though privateers,  
 Or secret knights on Gloriana's quest,  
 Recked not if round the glowing magic door  
 Of every inn the townsfolk grouped to hear  
 The storm-scarred seamen toasting Francis Drake,  
 Nor heeded what blithe urchin faces pressed  
 On each red-curtained magic casement, bright  
 With wild reflection of the fires within,  
 The fires, the glasses, and the singing lips  
 Lifting defiance to the powers of Spain.

#### SONG.

Sing we the Rose,  
 The flower of flowers most glorious  
 Never a storm that blows  
 Across our English sea,

But its heart breaks out wi' the Rose  
On England's flag victorious,  
The triumphing flag that flows  
Thro' the heavens of Liberty.

Sing we the Rose,  
The flower of flowers most beautiful!  
Until the world shall end  
She blossometh year by year,  
Red with the blood that flows  
For England's sake, most dutiful,  
Wherefore now we bend  
Our hearts and knees to her.

Sing we the Rose,  
The flower, the flower of war it is,  
Where deep i' the midnight gloom  
Its waves are the waves of the sea,  
And the glare of battle grows,  
And red over hulk and spar it is,  
Till the grim black broadsides bloom  
With our Rose of Victory.

Sing we the Rose,  
The flower, the flower of love it is,  
Which lovers aye shall sing  
And nightingales proclaim;  
For O, the heaven that glows,  
That glows and burns above it is  
Freedom's perpetual Spring,  
Our England's faithful fame.

Sing we the Rose,  
That Eastward still shall spread for us  
Upon the dawn's bright breast,  
Red leaves wi' the foam imperled;

And onward ever flows  
Till eventide make red for us  
A Rose that sinks i' the West  
And surges round the world ;  
Sing we the Rose !

One night as, with his great vice-admiral,  
Frobisher, his rear-admiral, Francis Knollys,  
And Thomas Fenner, his flag-captain, Drake  
Took counsel at his tavern, there came a knock,  
The door opened, and cold as from the sea  
The gloom rushed in, and there against the night,  
Clad as it seemed with wind and cloud and rain,  
Glittered a courtier whom by face and form  
All knew for the age's brilliant paladin,  
Sidney, the king of courtesy, a star  
Of chivalry. The seamen stared at him,  
Each with a hand upon the red-lined chart  
Outspread before them. Then all stared at Drake,  
Who crouched like a great bloodhound o'er the table,  
And rose with a strange light burning in his eyes ;  
For he remembered how, three years ago,  
That other courtier came, with words and smiles  
Copied from Sidney's self ; and in his ears  
Rang once again the sound of the two-edged sword  
Upon the desolate Patagonian shore  
Beneath Magellan's gallows. With a voice  
So harsh himself scarce knew it, he desired  
This fair new courtier's errand. With grim eyes  
He scanned the silken knight from head to foot,  
While Sidney, smiling graciously, besought  
Some place in their adventure. Drake's clenched fist  
Crashed down on the old oak table like a rock,  
Splintering the wood and dashing his rough wrist  
With blood, as he thundered, "By the living God,  
No ! We've no room for courtiers, now ! We leave  
All that to Spain."

Whereat, seeing Sidney stood

Amazed, Drake, drawing nearer, said, "You ask  
 More than you dream : I know you for a knight  
 Most perfect and most gentle, yea, a man  
 Ready to die on any battle-field  
 To save a wounded friend " (even so said Drake,  
 Not knowing how indeed this knight would die,  
 Yea, yield the cup of water from his lips  
 To save a wounded soldier, saying, "His need  
 Is greater!")

Drake outstretched his bleeding hand  
 And pointed through the door to where the gloom  
 Glimmered with bursting spray, and the thick night  
 Was all one wandering thunder of hidden seas  
 Rolling out of Eternity : "You'll find  
 No purple fields of Arcady out there,  
 No shepherds piping in those boisterous valleys,  
 No sheep among those roaring mountain-tops,  
 No lists of feudal chivalry. I've heard  
 That voice cry death to courtiers. 'Tis God's voice.  
 Take you the word of one who has occupied  
 His business in great waters. There's no room,  
 Meaning, or reason, office, or place, or name  
 For courtiers on the sea. Does the sea flatter?  
 You cannot bribe it, torture it, or tame it!  
 Its laws are those of the Juggernaut universe,  
 Remorseless—listen to that!"—a mighty wave  
 Broke thundering down the coast ; "your hands are white,  
 Your rapier jewelled, can you grapple that?  
 What part have you in all its flaming ways?  
 What share in its fierce gloom? Has your heart broken  
 As those waves break out there? Can you lie down  
 And sleep, as a lion-cub by the old lion,  
 When it shakes its mane out over you to hide you,  
 And leap out with the dawn as I have done?  
 These are big words ; but, see, my hand is red :  
 You cannot torture me, I have borne all that ;  
 And so I have some kinship with the sea,  
 Some sort of wild alliance with its storms,

Its exultations, ay, and its great wrath  
At last, and power upon them. 'Tis the worse  
For Spain. Be counselled well: come not between  
My sea and its rich vengeance."

Silently,

Bowing his head, Sidney withdrew. But Drake,  
So fiercely the old grief rankled in his heart,  
Summoned his swiftest horseman, bidding him ride,  
Ride like the wind through the night, straight to the Queen,  
Praying she would most instantly recall  
Her truant courtier. Nay, to make all sure,  
Drake sent a gang of seamen out to crouch  
Ambushed in woody hollows nigh the road,  
Under the sailing moon, there to waylay  
The Queen's reply, that she might never know  
It reached him, if it proved against his will.

And swiftly came that truant's stern recall;  
But Drake, in hourly dread of some new change  
In Gloriana's mood, slept not by night  
Or day, till out of roaring Plymouth Sound  
The pirate fleet swept to the wind-swept main,  
And took the wind and shook out all its sails.  
Then with the unfettered sea he mixed his soul  
In great rejoicing union, while the ships  
Crashing and soaring o'er the heart-free waves  
Drave ever straight for Spain.

Water and food

They lacked; but the fierce fever of his mind  
To sail from Plymouth ere the Queen's will changed  
Had left no time for these. Right on he drave,  
Determining, though the Queen's old officers  
Beneath him stood appalled, to take in stores  
Of all he needed, water, powder, food,  
By plunder of Spain herself. In Vigo bay,  
Close to Bayona town, under the cliffs  
Of Spain's world-wide and thunder-fraught prestige  
He anchored, with the old sea-touch that wakes

Our England still. There, in the tingling ears  
Of the world he cried, *En garde!* to the King of Spain.  
There, ordering out his pinnaces in force,  
While a great storm, as if he held indeed  
Heaven's batteries in reserve, growled o'er the sea,  
He landed. Ere one cumbrous limb of all  
The monstrous armaments of Spain could move  
His ships were stored; and ere the sword of Spain  
Stirred in its crusted sheath, Bayona town  
Beheld an empty sea; for like a dream  
The pirate fleet had vanished, none knew whither.  
But, in its visible stead, invisible fear  
Filled the vast rondure of the sea and sky  
As with the omnipresent soul of Drake.  
For when Spain saw the small black anchored fleet  
Ride in her bays, the sight set bounds to fear.  
She knew at least the ships were oak, the guns  
Of common range: nor did she dream e'en Drake  
Could sail two seas at once. Now all her coasts  
Heard him all night in every bursting wave,  
His topsails gleamed in every moonlit cloud;  
His battle-lantern glittered in the stars  
That hung the low horizon. He became  
A universal menace; yet there followed  
No sight or sound of him, unless the sea  
Were that grim soul incarnate. Did it not roar  
His great commands? The very spray that lashed  
The cheeks of Spanish seamen lashed their hearts  
To helpless hatred of him. The wind sang  
*El Draque* across the rattling blocks and sheets  
When storms perplexed them; and when ships went down,  
As under the fury of his onsetting battle,  
The drowning sailors cursed him while they sank.

Suddenly a rumour shook the Spanish Court,  
He has gone once more to the Indies. Santa Cruz,  
High Admiral of Spain, the most renowned  
Captain in Europe, clamoured for a fleet

Of forty sail instantly to pursue.  
For unto him whose little *Golden Hynde*  
Was weapon enough, now leading such a squadron,  
The West Indies, the whole Pacific coast,  
And the whole Spanish Main, lay at his mercy.

And onward over the great grey gleaming sea  
Swept like a thunder-cloud the pirate fleet  
With vengeance in its heart. Five years ago,  
Young Hawkins, in the Cape Verde Islands, met—  
At Santiago—with such treachery  
As Drake burned to requite, and from that hour  
Was Santiago doomed. His chance had come,  
Drake swooped upon it, plundered it, and was gone,  
Leaving the treacherous isle a desolate heap  
Of smoking ashes in the leaden sea,  
While onward all those pirate bowsprits plunged  
Into the golden West, across the broad  
Atlantic once again; "For I will show,"  
Said Drake, "that Englishmen henceforth will sail  
Old ocean where they will." Onward they surged,  
And the great glittering crested majestic waves  
Jubilantly rushed up to meet the keels,  
And there was nought around them but the grey  
Ruin and roar of the huge Atlantic seas,  
Grey mounded seas, pursuing and pursued,  
That fly, hounded and hounding on for ever,  
From empty marge to marge of the grey sky.  
Over the wandering wilderness of foam,  
Onward, through storm and death, Drake swept; for now  
Once more a fell plague gripped the tossing ships,  
And not by twos and threes as heretofore  
His crews were minished; but in three black days  
Three hundred seamen in their shotted shrouds  
Were cast into the deep. Onward he swept,  
Implacably, having in mind to strike  
Spain in the throat at St Domingo, port  
Of Hispaniola, a city of far renown,



A jewel on the shores of old romance,  
Palm-shadowed, gated with immortal gold,  
Queen city of Spain's dominions over sea,  
And guarded by great guns. Out of the dawn  
The pirate ships came leaping, grim and black,  
And ere the Spaniards were awake, the flag  
Of England floated from their topmost tower.  
But since he had not troops enough to hold  
So great a city, Drake entrenched his men  
Within the Plaza and held the batteries.  
Thence he demanded ransom, and sent out  
A boy with flag of truce. The boy's return  
Drake waited long. Under a sheltering palm  
He stood, watching the enemies' camp, and lo,  
Along the hot white purple-shadowed road  
Tow'rds him, a crawling shape writhed through the dust  
Up to his feet, a shape besmeared with blood,  
A shape that held the stumps up of its wrists  
And moaned, an eyeless thing, a naked rag  
Of flesh obscenely mangled, a small face  
Hideously puckered, shrivelled like a monkey's,  
With lips drawn backward from its teeth.

“Speak, speak,  
In God's name, speak, what art thou?” whispered Drake,  
And a sharp cry came, answering his dread,  
A cry as of a sea-bird in the wind  
Desolately astray from all earth's shores,  
“Captain, I am thy boy, only thy boy!  
See, see, my captain, see what they have done!  
Captain, I only bore the flag; I only——”

“O, lad, lad, lad,” moaned Drake, and, stooping, strove  
To pillow the mangled head upon his arm.  
“What have they done to thee, what have they done?”  
And at the touch the boy screamed, once, and died.

Then like a savage sea with arms uplift  
To heaven the wrath of Drake blazed thundering,

"Eternal God, be this the doom of Spain!  
Henceforward have no pity. Send the strength  
Of Thy great seas into my soul that I  
May devastate this empire, this red hell  
They make of Thy good earth."

His men drew round,  
Staring in horror at the silent shape  
That daubed his feet. Like a cold wind  
His words went through their flesh :

"This is the lad  
That bore our flag of truce. This hath Spain done.  
Look well upon it, draw the smoke of the blood  
Up into your nostrils, my companions,  
And down into your souls. This makes an end  
For Spain ! Bring forth the Spanish prisoners  
And let me look on them."

Forth they were brought,  
A swarthy gorgeous band of soldiers, priests,  
And sailors, hedged between two sturdy files  
Of British tars with naked cutlasses.  
Close up to Drake they halted, under the palm,  
Gay smiling prisoners, for they thought their friends  
Had ransomed them. Then they looked up and met  
A glance that swept athwart them like a sword,  
Making the blood strain back from their blanched faces  
Into their quivering hearts, with unknown dread,  
As that accuser pointed to the shape  
Before his feet.

"Dogs, will ye lap his blood  
Before ye die ? Make haste ; for it grows cold !  
Ye will not, will not even dabble your hands  
In that red puddle of flesh, what ? Are ye Spaniards ?  
Come, come, I'll look at you, perchance there's one  
That's but a demi-devil and holds you back."  
And with the word Drake stepped among their ranks  
And read each face among the swarthy crew—  
The gorgeous soldiers, ringleted sailors, priests  
With rosary and cross, a slender page

In scarlet with a cloud of golden hair,  
And two rope-girdled friars.

The slim page  
Drake drew before the throng. "You are young," he said,  
"Go; take this message to the camp of Spain,  
Tell them I have a hunger in my soul  
To look upon the murderers of this boy,  
To see what eyes they have, what manner of mouths,  
To touch them and to take their hands in mine,  
And draw them close to me and smile upon them  
Until they know my soul as I know theirs,  
And they grovel in the dust and grope for mercy.  
Say that, until I get them, every day  
I'll hang two Spaniards though I dispeople  
The Spanish Main. Tell them that, every day,  
I'll burn a portion of their city down,  
Then find another city and burn that,  
And then burn others till I burn away  
Their empire from the world, ay, till I reach  
The imperial throne of Philip with my fires,  
And send it shrieking down to burn in hell  
For ever. Go!"

Then Drake turned once again  
To face the Spanish prisoners. With a voice  
Cold as the passionless utterance of Fate  
His grim command went forth. "Now, provost-marshal,  
Begin with yon two friars, in whose faces  
Chined like singed swine, and eyed with the spent coals  
Of filthy living, sweats the glory of Spain.  
Strip off their leprous rags  
And twist their ropes around their throats and hang them  
High over the Spanish camp for all to see.  
At dawn I'll choose two more."

## BOOK X.

## ACROSS the Atlantic

Great rumours rushed as of a mighty wind,  
The wind of the spirit of Drake. But who shall tell  
In this cold age the power that he became  
Who drew the universe within his soul  
And moved with cosmic forces? Though the deep  
Divided it from Drake, the gorgeous court  
Of Philip shuddered away from the streaming coasts  
As a wind-cuffed field of golden wheat. The King,  
Bidding his guests to a feast in his own ship  
On that wind-darkened sea, was made a mock,  
As one by one his ladies proffered excuse  
For fear of That beyond. Round Europe now  
Ballad and story told how in the cabin  
Of Francis Drake there hung a magic glass  
Wherein he saw the fleets of all his enemies  
And all that passed aboard them. Rome herself,  
Perplexed that this proud heretic should prevail,  
Fostered a darker dream, that Drake had bought,  
Like old Norse wizards, power to loose or bind  
The winds at will.

And now a wilder tale  
Flashed o'er the deep—of a distant blood-red dawn  
O'er San Domingo, where the embattled troops  
Of Spain and Drake were met—but not in war—  
Met in the dawn, by his compelling will,  
To offer up a sacrifice. Yea, there  
Between the hosts, the hands of Spain herself

Slaughtered the Spanish murderers of the boy  
 Who had borne Drake's flag of truce ; offered them up  
 As a blood-offering and an expiation  
 Lest Drake, with that dread alchemy of his soul,  
 Should e'en transmute the dust beneath their feet  
 To one same substance with the place of pain  
 And whelm them suddenly in the eternal fires.  
 Rumour on rumour rushed across the sea,  
 Large mockeries, and one most bitter of all,  
 Wormwood to Philip, of how Drake had stood  
 I' the governor's house at San Domingo, and seen  
 A mighty scutcheon of the King of Spain  
 Whereon was painted the terrestrial globe,  
 And on the globe a mighty steed in act  
 To spring into the heavens, and from its mouth  
 Streaming like smoke a scroll, and on the scroll  
 Three words of flame and fury—*Non sufficit*  
*Orbis*—of how Drake and his seamen stood  
 Gazing upon it, and could not forbear  
 From summoning the Spaniards to expound  
 Its meaning, whereupon a hurricane roar  
 Of mirth burst from those bearded British lips,  
 And that immortal laughter shook the world.

So, while the imperial warrior eyes of Spain  
 Watched, every hour, her vast Armada grow  
 Readier to launch and shatter with one stroke  
 Our island's frail defence, fear gripped her still,  
 For there came sounds across the heaving sea  
 Of secret springs unsealed, forces unchained,  
 A mustering of deep elemental powers,  
 A sound as of the burgeoning of boughs  
 In universal April and dead hearts  
 Uprising from their tombs ; a mighty cry  
 Of resurrection, surging through the souls  
 Of all mankind. For now the last wild tale  
Swept like another dawn across the deep ;  
And, in that dawn, men saw the slaves of Spain,

The mutilated negroes of the mines,  
With gaunt backs wealed and branded, scarred and seared  
By whip and iron, in Spain's brute lust for gold,  
Saw them, at Drake's great liberating word,  
Burst from their chains, erect, uplifting hands  
Of rapture to the glad new light that then,  
Then first, began to struggle thro' the clouds  
And crown all manhood with a sacred crown  
August—a light which, though from age to age  
Clouds may obscure it, grows and still shall grow,  
Until that Kingdom come, that grand Communion,  
That Commonweal, that Empire, which still draws  
Nigher with every hour, that Federation,  
That turning of the wasteful strength of war  
To accomplish large and fruitful tasks of peace,  
That gathering up of one another's loads  
Whereby the weak are strengthened and the strong  
Made stronger in the increasing good of all.  
Then, suddenly, it seemed, as he had gone,  
A ship came stealing into Plymouth Sound  
And Drake was home again, but not to rest ;  
For scarce had he cast anchor ere the road  
To London rang beneath the flying hoofs  
That bore his brief despatch to Burleigh, saying—  
“We have missed the Plate Fleet by but twelve hours' sail,  
The reason being best known to God. No less  
We have given a cooling to the King of Spain.  
There is a great gap opened which, methinks,  
Is little to his liking. We have sacked  
The towns of his chief Indies, burnt their ships,  
Captured great store of gold and precious stones,  
Three hundred pieces of artillery,  
The more part brass. Our loss is heavy indeed,  
Under the hand of God, eight hundred men,  
Three parts of them by sickness. Captain Moon,  
My trusty old companion, he that struck  
The first blow in the South Seas at a Spaniard,  
Died of a grievous wound at Cartagena.

My fleet and I are ready to strike again  
 At once, where'er the Queen and England please.  
 I pray for her commands, and those with speed,  
 That I may strike again." Outside the scroll  
 These words were writ once more—"My Queen's commands  
 I much desire, your servant, Francis Drake."

This terse despatch the hunchback Burleigh read  
 Thrice over, with the broad cliff of his brow  
 Bending among his books. Thrice he assayed  
 To steel himself with caution as of old ;  
 And thrice, as a glorious lightning running along  
 And flashing between those simple words, he saw  
 The great new power that lay at England's hand,  
 An ocean-sovereignty, a power unknown  
 Before, but dawning now ; a power that swept  
 All earth's old plots and counterplots away  
 Like straws ; the germ of an unmeasured force  
 New-born, that laid the source of Spanish might  
 At England's mercy ! Could that force but grow  
 Ere Spain should nip it, ere the mighty host  
 That waited in the Netherlands even now,  
 That host of thirty thousand men encamped  
 Round Antwerp, under Parma, should embark  
 Convoys by that Invincible Armada  
 To leap at England's throat ! Thrice he assayed  
 To think of England's helplessness, her ships  
 Little and few. Thrice he assayed to quench  
 With caution the high furnace of his soul  
 Which Drake had kindled. As he read the last  
 Rough simple plea, *I wait my Queen's commands*,  
 His deep eyes flashed with glorious tears.

He leapt  
 To his feet and cried aloud, "Before my God,  
 I am proud, I am very proud for England's sake !  
 This Drake is a terrible man to the King of Spain."

And still, still, Gloriana, brooding darkly

On Mary of Scotland's doom, who now at last  
Was plucked from out her bosom like a snake  
Hissing of war with France, a queenly snake,  
A Lilith in whose lovely gleaming folds  
And sexual bonds the judgment of mankind  
Writhes even yet half-strangled, meting out  
Wild execrations on the maiden Queen  
Who quenched those jewelled eyes and mixt with dust  
That white and crimson, who with cold sharp steel  
In substance and in spirit, severed the neck  
And straightened out those glittering supple coils  
For ever; though for evermore will men  
Lie subject to the unforgotten gleam  
Of diamond eyes and cruel crimson mouth,  
And curse the sword-bright intellect that struck  
Like lightning far through Europe and the world  
For England, when amid the embattled fury  
Of world-wide empires, England stood alone.  
Still she held back from war, still disavowed  
The deeds of Drake to Spain; and yet once more  
Philip, resolved at last never to swerve  
By one digressive stroke, one ell or inch  
From his own patient, sure, laborious path,  
Accepted her suave plea, and with all speed  
Pressed on his huge emprise until it seemed  
His coasts groaned with grim bulks of cannonry,  
Thick loaded hulks of thunder and towers of doom;  
And, all round Antwerp, Parma still prepared  
To hurl such armies o'er the rolling sea  
As in all history hardly the earth herself  
Felt shake with terror her own green hills and plains.  
*I wait my Queen's commands!* Despite the plea  
Urged every hour upon her with the fire  
That burned for action in the soul of Drake,  
Still she delayed, till on one darkling eve  
She gave him audience in that glimmering room  
Where first he saw her. Strangely sounded there  
The seaman's rough strong passion as he poured



His heart before her, pleading—"Every hour  
Is one more victory lost," and only heard  
The bitter answer—"Nay, but every hour  
Is a breath snatched from the unconquerable  
Doom, that awaits us if we are forced to war.  
Yea, and who knows?—though Spain may forge a sword,  
Its point is not inevitably bared  
Against the breast of England!" As she spake,  
The winds without clamoured with clash of bells,  
There was a gleam of torches and a roar—  
*Mary, the traitress of the North, is dead,  
God save the Queen!*

Her head bent down : she wept.

"Pity me, friend, though I be queen, O yet  
My heart is woman, and I am sore pressed  
On every side,—Scotland and France and Spain  
Beset me, and I know not where to turn."  
Even as she spake, there came a hurried step  
Into that dim rich chamber. Walsingham  
Stood there, before her, without ceremony  
Thrusting a letter forth : "At last," he cried,  
"Your Majesty may read the full intent  
Of priestly Spain. Here, plainly written out  
Upon this paper, worth your kingdom's crown,  
This letter, stolen by a trusty spy,  
Out of the inmost chamber of the Pope  
Sixtus himself, here is your murder planned :  
Blame not your Ministers who with such haste  
Plucked out this viper, Mary, from your breast!  
Read here—how, with his thirty thousand men,  
The pick of Europe, Parma joins the Scots,  
While Ireland, grasped in their Armada's clutch,  
And the Isle of Wight, against our west and south  
Become their base."

"Rome, Rome, and Rome again,  
And always Rome," she muttered; "even here  
In England hath she thousands yet. She hath struck  
Her curse out with pontific finger at me,

Cursed me down and away to the bottomless pit.  
 Her shadow like the shadow of clouds or sails,  
 The shadow of that huge event at hand,  
 Darkens the seas already, and the wind  
 Is on my cheek that shakes my kingdom down.  
 She hath thousands here in England, born and bred  
 Englishmen. They will stand by Rome!"

"'Fore God,"

Cried Walsingham, "my Queen, you do them wrong!  
 There is another Rome—not this of Spain  
 Which lurks to pluck the world back into darkness  
 And stab it there for gold. There is a City  
 Whose eyes are tow'rd the morning; on whose heights  
 Blazes the Cross of Christ above the world;  
 A Rome that shall wage warfare yet for God  
 In the dark days to come, a Rome whose thought  
 Shall march with our humanity and be proud  
 To cast old creeds like seed into the ground,  
 Watch the strange shoots and foster the new flower  
 Of faiths we know not yet. Is this a dream?  
 I speak as one by knighthood bound to speak;  
 For even this day—and my heart burns with it—  
 I heard the Catholic gentlemen of England  
 Speaking in grave assembly. At one breath  
 Of peril to our island, why, their swords  
 Leapt from their scabbards, and their cry went up  
 To split the heavens—*God save our English Queen!*"  
 Even as he spake there passed the rushing gleam  
 Of torches once again, and as they stood  
 Silently listening, all the winds ran wild  
 With clamouring bells, and a great cry went up—  
*God save Elizabeth, our English Queen!*

"I'll vouch for some two hundred Catholic throats  
 Among that thousand," whispered Walsingham  
 Eagerly, with his eyes on the Queen's face.  
 Then, seeing it brighten, fervently he cried,  
 Pressing the swift advantage home, "O, Madam,

The heart of England now is all on fire !  
We are one people, as we never have been  
In all our history, all prepared to die  
Around your throne. Madam, you are beloved  
As never yet was English king or queen ! ”  
She looked at him, the tears in her keen eyes  
Glittered—“ And I am very proud,” she said,  
“ But if our enemies command the world,  
And we have one small island and no more . . . ”  
She ceased ; and Drake, in a strange voice, hoarse and low,  
Trembling with passion deeper than all speech,  
Cried out—“ No more than the great ocean-sea  
Which makes the enemies’ coast our frontier now ;  
No more than that great Empire of the deep  
Which rolls from Pole to Pole, washing the world  
With thunder, that great Empire whose command  
This day is yours to take. Hear me, my Queen,  
This is a dream, a new dream, but a true ;  
For mightier days are dawning on the world  
Than heart of man hath known. If England hold  
The sea, she holds the hundred thousand gates  
That open to futurity. She holds  
The highway of all ages. Argosies  
Of unknown glory set their sails this day  
For England out of ports beyond the stars.  
Ay, on the sacred seas we ne’er shall know  
They hoist their sails this day by peaceful quays,  
Great gleaming wharves i’ the perfect City of God,  
If she but claim her heritage.”

He ceased ;  
And the deep dream of that new realm, the sea,  
Through all the soul of Gloriana surged  
A moment, then with splendid eyes that filled  
With fire of sunsets far away, she cried  
(Faith making her a child, yet queenlier still)  
“ Yea, claim it thou for me ! ”

A moment there  
Trembling she stood. Then, once again, there passed

A rush of torches through the gloom without,  
And a great cry "*God save Elizabeth,*  
*God save our English Queen!*"

"Yea go, then, go,"

She said, "God speed you now, Sir Francis Drake,  
Not as a privateer, but with full powers,  
My Admiral-at-the-Seas!"

Without a word

Drake bent above her hand and, ere she knew it,  
His eyes from the dark doorway flashed farewell  
And he was gone. But ere he leapt to saddle  
Walsingham stood at his stirrup, muttering "Ride,  
Ride now like hell to Plymouth; for the Queen  
Is hard beset, and ere ye are out at sea  
Her mood will change. The friends of Spain will move  
Earth and the heavens for your recall. They'll tempt her  
With their false baits of peace, though I shall stand  
Here at your back through thick and thin; farewell!"  
Fire flashed beneath the hoofs and Drake was gone.

Scarce had he vanished in the night than doubt  
Once more assailed the Queen. The death of Mary  
Had brought e'en France against her. Walsingham,  
And Burleigh himself, prime mover of that death,  
Being held in much disfavour for it, stood  
As helpless. Long ere Drake or human power,  
They thought, could put to sea, a courier sped  
To Plymouth bidding Drake forbear to strike  
At Spain, but keep to the high seas, and lo,  
The roadstead glittered empty. Drake was gone!

Gone! Though the friends of Spain had poured their gold  
To thin his ranks, and every hour his crews  
Deserted, he had laughed—"Let Spain buy scum!  
Next to an honest seaman I love best  
An honest landsman. What more goodly task  
Than teaching brave men seamanship?" He had filled

His ships with soldiers ! Out in the teeth of the gale  
That raged against him he had driven. In vain,  
Amid the boisterous laughter of the quays,  
A pinnace dashed in hot pursuit and met  
A roaring breaker and came hurtling back  
With oars and spars all trailing in the foam,  
A tangled mass of wreckage and despair.  
Sky swept to stormy sky : no sail could live  
In that great yeast of waves ; but Drake was gone !

Then, once again, across the rolling sea  
Great rumours rushed of how he had sacked the port  
Of Cadiz and had swept along the coast  
To Lisbon, where the whole Armada lay.  
Had snapped up prizes under its very nose,  
And taunted Santa Cruz, High Admiral  
Of Spain, striving to draw him out for fight,  
And offering, if his course should lie that way,  
To convoy him to Britain, taunted him  
So bitterly that for once, in the world's eyes,  
A jest had power to kill ; for Santa Cruz  
Died with the spleen of it, since he could not move  
Before the appointed season. Then there came  
Flying back home, the Queen's old Admiral  
Borough, deserting Drake and all aghast  
At Drake's temerity : " For," he said, " this man,  
Thrust o'er my head, against all precedent,  
Bade me follow him into harbour mouths  
A-flame with cannon like the jaws of death,  
Whereat I much demurred ; and straightway Drake  
Clapped me in irons, me—an officer  
And Admiral of the Queen ; and, though my voice  
Was all against it, plunged into the pit  
Without me, left me with some word that burns  
And rankles in me still, making me fear  
The man was mad, some word of lonely seas,  
A desert island and a mutineer  
And dead Magellan's gallows.   Sirs, my life

Was hardly safe with him. Why, he resolved  
To storm the Castle of St Vincent, sirs,  
A castle on a cliff, grinning with guns,  
Well known impregnable ! The Spaniards fear  
Drake ; but to see him land below it and bid  
Surrender, sirs, the strongest fort of Spain  
Without a blow, they laughed ! And straightway he,  
With all the fury of Satan, turned that cliff  
To hell itself. He sent down to the ships  
For faggots, broken oars, beams, bowsprits, masts,  
And piled them up against the outer gates,  
Higher and higher, and fired them. There he stood  
Amid the smoke and flame and cannon-shot,  
This Admiral, like a common seaman, black  
With soot, besmeared with blood, his naked arms  
Full of great faggots, labouring like a giant  
And roaring like Apollyon. Sirs, he is mad !  
But did he take it, say you ? Yea, he took it,  
The mightiest stronghold on the coast of Spain,  
Took it and tumbled all its big brass guns  
Clattering over the cliffs into the sea.  
But, sirs, ye need not raise a cheer so loud !  
It is not warfare. 'Twas a madman's trick,  
A devil's !"

Then the rumour of a storm  
That scattered the fleet of Drake to the four winds  
Disturbed the heart of England, as his ships  
Came straggling into harbour, one by one,  
Saying they could not find him. Then, at last,  
When the storm burst in its earth-shaking might  
Along our coasts, one night of rolling gloom  
His cannon woke old Plymouth. In he came  
Across the thunder and lightning of the sea  
With his grim ship of war and, close behind,  
A shadow like a mountain or a cloud  
Torn from the heaven-high panoplies of Spain,  
A captured galleon loomed, and round her prow  
A blazoned scroll, whence (as she neared the quays

Which many a lanthorn swung from brawny fist  
 Yellowed) the sudden crimson of her name  
*San Filippe* flashed o'er the white sea of faces,  
 And a rending shout went skyward that outroared  
 The blanching breakers—"Tis the heart of Spain!  
 The great *San Filippe*!" Overhead she towered,  
 The mightiest ship afloat; and in her hold  
 The riches of a continent, a prize  
 Greater than earth had ever known; for there  
 Not only ruby and pearl like ocean-beaches  
 Heaped on some wizard coast in that dim hull  
 Blazed to the lanthorn-light; not only gold  
 Gleamed, though of gold a million would not buy  
 Her store; but in her cabin lay the charts  
 And secrets of the wild unwhispered wealth  
 Of India, secrets that splashed London wharves  
 With coloured dreams and made her misty streets  
 Flame like an Eastern City when the sun  
 Shatters itself on jewelled domes and spills  
 Its crimson wreckage thro' the silvery palms.  
 And of those dreams the far East India quest  
 Began: the first foundation-stone was laid  
 Of our great Indian Empire, and a star  
 Began to tremble on the brows of England  
 That Time can never darken.

But now the seas  
 Darkened indeed with menace; now at last  
 The cold wind of the black approaching wings  
 Of Azrael crept across the deep: the storm  
 Throbbled with their thunderous pulse, and ere that moon  
 Waned, a swift gunboat foamed into the Sound  
 With word that all the Invincible Armada  
 Was hoisting sail for England.

Even now,  
 Elizabeth, torn a thousand ways, withheld  
 The word for which Drake pleaded as for life,  
 That he might meet them ere they left their coasts,

Meet them or ever they reached the Channel, meet them  
Now, or—"Too late! too late!" At last his voice  
Beat down e'en those that blindly dinned her ears  
With chatter of meeting Spain on British soil;  
And swiftly she commanded (seeing once more  
The light that burned amid the approaching gloom  
In Drake's deep eyes) Lord Howard of Effingham,  
High Admiral of England, straight to join him  
At Plymouth Sound. "How many ships are wanted?"  
She asked him, thinking "we are few, indeed!"  
"Give me but sixteen merchantmen," he said,  
"And but four battleships, by the mercy of God,  
I'll answer for the Armada!" Out to sea  
They swept, in the teeth of a gale; but vainly Drake  
Strove to impart the thought wherewith his mind  
Travailed—to win command of the ocean-sea  
By bursting on the fleets of Spain at once  
Even as they left their ports, not as of old  
To hover in a vain dream of defence  
Round fifty threatened points of British coast,  
But Howard, clinging to his old-world order,  
Flung out his ships in a loose, long, straggling line  
Across the Channel, waiting, wary, alert,  
But powerless thus as a string of scattered sea-gulls  
Beating against the storm. Then, flying to meet them,  
A merchantman brought terror down the wind,  
With news that she had seen that monstrous host  
Stretching from sky to sky, great hulks of doom,  
Dragging death's midnight with them o'er the sea  
Tow'rds England. Up to Howard's flag-ship Drake  
In his immortal battle-ship—*Revenge*,  
Rushed thro' the foam, and thro' the swirling seas  
His pinnace dashed alongside. On to the decks  
O' the tossing flag-ship, like a very Viking  
Shaking the surf and rainbows of the spray  
From sun-smit lion-like mane and beard he stood  
Before Lord Howard in the escutcheoned poop



And poured his heart out like the rending sea  
In passionate wave on wave :

“If yonder fleet  
Once reach the Channel, hardly the mercy of God  
Saves England ! I would pray with my last breath,  
Let us beat up to windward of them now,  
And handle them before they reach the Channel.”  
“Nay ; but we cannot bare the coast,” cried Howard,  
“Nor have we stores of powder or food enough !”  
“My lord,” said Drake, with his great arm outstretched  
“There is food enough in yonder enemy’s ships,  
And powder enough and cannon-shot enough !  
We must re-victual there. Look ! look !” he cried,  
And pointed to the heavens. As for a soul  
That by sheer force of will compels the world  
To work his bidding, so it seemed the wind  
That blew against them slowly veered. The sails  
Quivered, the skies revolved. A northerly breeze  
Awoke and now, behind the British ships,  
Blew steadily tow’rds the unseen host of Spain.  
“It is the breath of God,” cried Drake, “they lie  
Wind-bound, and we may work our will with them.  
Signal the word, Lord Howard, and drive down !”  
And as a man convinced by heaven itself  
Lord Howard ordered, straightway, the whole fleet  
To advance.

And now, indeed, as Drake foresaw,  
The Armada lay, beyond the dim horizon,  
Wind-bound and helpless in Corunna bay,  
At England’s mercy, could her fleet but draw  
Nigh enough, with its fire-ships and great guns  
To windward. Nearer, nearer, league by league  
The ships of England came ; till Ushant lay  
Some seventy leagues behind. Then, yet once more  
The wind veered, straight against them. To remain  
Beating against it idly was to starve :  
And, as a man whose power upon the world

Fails for one moment of exhausted will,  
Drake, gathering up his forces as he went  
For one more supreme effort, turned his ship  
Tow'rds Plymouth, and retreated with the rest.

There, while the ships refitted with all haste  
And axe and hammer rang, one golden eve  
Just as the setting sun began to fringe  
The clouds with crimson, and the creaming waves  
Were one wild riot of fairy rainbows, Drake  
Stood with old comrades on the close-cropped green  
Of Plymouth Hoe, playing a game of bowls.  
Far off unseen, a little barque, full-sail,  
Struggled and leapt and strove tow'rds Plymouth Sound,  
Noteless as any speckled herring-gull  
Flickering between the white flakes of the waves.  
A group of schoolboys with their satchels lay  
Stretched on the green, gazing with great wide eyes  
Upon their seamen heroes, as like gods  
Disporting with the battles of the world  
They loomed, tossing black bowls like cannon-balls  
Against the rosy West, or lounged at ease  
With faces olive-dark against that sky  
Laughing, while from the neighbouring inn mine host,  
White-aproned and blue-jerkined, hurried out  
With foaming cups of sack, and they drank deep,  
Tossing their heads back under the golden clouds  
And burying their bearded lips. The hues  
That slashed their doublets, for the boys' bright eyes  
(Even as the gleams of Grecian cloud or moon  
Revealed the old gods) were here rich dusky streaks  
Of splendour from the Spanish Main, that shone  
But to proclaim these heroes. There a boy  
More bold crept nearer to a slouched hat thrown  
Upon the green, and touched the silver plume,  
And felt as if he had touched a sunset-isle  
Of feathery palms beyond a crimson sea.  
Another stared at the blue rings of smoke

A storm-scarred seaman puffed from a long pipe  
 Primed with the strange new herb they had lately found  
 In far Virginia. But the little ship  
 Now plunging into Plymouth Bay none saw.  
 E'en when she had anchored and her straining boat  
 Had touched the land, and the boat's crew over the quays  
 Leapt with a shout, scarce was there one to heed.  
 A seaman, smiling, swaggered out of the inn  
 Swinging in one brown hand a gleaming cage  
 Wherein a big green parrot chattered and clung  
 Fluttering against the wires. A troop of girls  
 With arms linked paused to watch the game of bowls;  
 And now they flocked around the cage, while one  
 With rosy finger tempted the horny beak  
 To bite. Close overhead a sea-mew flashed  
 Seaward. Once, from an open window, soft  
 Through trellised leaves, not far away, a voice  
 Floated, a voice that flushed the cheek of Drake,  
 The voice of Bess, bending her glossy head  
 Over the broidery frame, in a quiet song.

The song ceased. Still, with rainbows in their eyes,  
 The schoolboys watched the bowls like cannon-balls  
 Roll from the hand of gods along the turf.

Suddenly, tow'rds the green, a little cloud  
 Of seamen, shouting, stumbling, as they ran  
 Drew all eyes on them. The game ceased. A voice  
 Rough with the storms of many an ocean roared  
 "Drake! Cap'en Drake! The Armada!  
 They are in the Channel! We sighted them—  
 A line of battle-ships! We could not see  
 An end of them. They stretch from north to south  
 Like a great storm of clouds, glinting with guns,  
 From sky to sky!"

So, after all his strife,  
 The wasted weeks had tripped him, the fierce hours  
 Of pleading for the sea's command, great hours

And golden moments, all were lost. The fleet  
Of Spain had won the Channel without a blow.  
All eyes were turned on Drake, as he stood there  
A giant against the sunset and the sea  
Looming, alone. Far off, the first white star  
Gleamed in a rosy space of heaven. He tossed  
A grim black ball i' the lustrous air and laughed,—  
“Come, lads,” he said, “we’ve time to finish the game!”

## BOOK XI.

FEW minutes, and well wasted those, were spent  
On that great game of bowls; for well knew Drake  
What panic threatened Plymouth, since his fleet  
Lay trapped there by the black head-wind that blew  
Straight up the Sound, and Plymouth town itself,  
Except the ships won seaward ere the dawn,  
Lay at the Armada's mercy. Never a seaman  
Of all the sea-dogs clustered on the quays,  
And all the captains clamouring round Lord Howard,  
Hoped that one ship might win to the open sea :  
At dawn, they thought, the Armada's rolling guns  
To windward, in an hour, must shatter them,  
Huddled in their red slaughter-house like sheep.

Now was the great sun sunken and the night  
Dark. Far to Westward, like the soul of man  
Fighting blind nature, a wild flare of red  
Upon some windy headland suddenly leapt  
And vanished flickering into the clouds. Again  
It leapt and vanished : then all at once it streamed  
Steadily as a crimson torch upheld  
By Titan hands to heaven. It was the first  
Beacon ! A sudden silence swept along  
The seething quays, and in their midst appeared  
Drake.

Then the jubilant thunder of his voice  
Rolled, buffeting the sea-wind far and nigh,  
And ere they knew what power as of a sea

Surged through them, his immortal battle-ship  
*Revenge* had flung out cables to the quays,  
And while the seamen, as he had commanded,  
Knotted thick ropes together, he stood apart  
(For well he knew what panic threatened still)  
Whittling idly at a scrap of wood,  
And carved a little boat out for the child  
Of some old sea-companion.  
So great and calm a master of the world  
Seemed Drake that, as he whittled, and the chips  
Fluttered into the blackness over the quay,  
Men said that in this hour of England's need  
Each tiny flake turned to a battle-ship ;  
For now began the lanthorns, one by one,  
To glitter, and half-reveal the shadowy hulks  
Before him.—So the huge old legend grew,  
Not all unworthy the Homeric age  
Of gods and god-like men.

St Michael's Mount,

Answering the first wild beacon far away,  
Rolled crimson thunders to the stormy sky !  
The ropes were knotted. Through the panting dark  
Great heaving lines of seamen all together  
Hauled with a shout, and all together again  
Hauled with a shout against the roaring wind ;  
And slowly, slowly, onward tow'rd's the sea  
Moved the *Revenge*, and seaward ever heaved  
The brawny backs together, and in their midst,  
Suddenly, as they slackened, Drake was there  
Hauling like any ten, and with his heart  
Doubling the strength of all, giving them joy  
Of battle against those odds,—Ay, till they found  
Delight i' the burning tingle of the blood  
That even their hardy hands must feel besmear  
The harsh, rough, straining ropes. There as they toiled,  
Answering a score of hills, old Beachy Head  
Streamed like a furnace to the rolling clouds.  
Then all around the coast each windy ness

And craggy mountain kindled. Peak from peak  
 Caught the tremendous fire, and passed it on  
 Round the bluff East and the black mouth of Thames,—  
 Ay, Northward to the waste wild Yorkshire fells  
 And gloomy Cumberland, where, like a giant,  
 Great Skiddaw grasped the red tempestuous brand,  
 And thrust it up against the reeling heavens.  
 Then all night long, inland, the wandering winds  
 Ran wild with clamour and clash of startled bells;  
 All night the cities seethed with torches, flashed  
 With twenty thousand flames of burnished steel;  
 While over the trample and thunder of hooves blazed forth  
 The lightning of wild trumpets. Lonely lanes  
 Of country darkness, lit by cottage doors  
 Entwined with rose and honeysuckle, roared  
 Like mountain-torrents now—East, West, and South,  
 As to the coasts with pike and musket streamed  
 The trained bands, horse and foot, from every town  
 And every hamlet. All the shaggy hills  
 From Milford Haven to the Downs of Kent,  
 And up to Humber, gleamed with many a hedge  
 Of pikes between the beacon's crimson glares;  
 While in red London forty thousand men,  
 In case the Invader should prevail, drew swords  
 Around their Queen. All night in dark St Paul's,  
 While round it rolled a multitudinous roar  
 As of the Atlantic on a Western beach,  
 And all the leaning London streets were lit  
 With fury of torches, rose the passionate prayer  
 Of England's peril:

*O Lord God of Hosts,  
 Let Thine enemies know that Thou hast taken  
 England into Thine hands!*

The mighty sound  
 Rolled, billowing round the kneeling aisles, then died,  
 Echoing up the heights. A voice, far off,  
 As on the cross of Calvary, caught it up  
 And poured the prayer o'er that deep hush, alone:

*We beseech Thee, O God, to go before our armies,  
Bless and prosper them both by land and sea !  
Grant unto them Thy victory, O God,  
As Thou usedst to do to Thy children when they please Thee !  
All power, all strength, all victory come from Thee !  
Then from the lips of all those thousands burst  
A sound as from the rent heart of an ocean,  
One tumult, one great rushing storm of wings  
Cleaving the darkness round the Gates of Heaven :  
Some put their trust in chariots and some in horses ;  
But we will remember Thy name, O Lord our God !*

So, while at Plymouth Sound her seamen toiled  
All through the night, and scarce a ship had won  
Seaward, the heart of England cried to God.  
All night, while trumpets yelled and blared without,  
And signal cannon shook the blazoned panes,  
And billowing multitudes went thundering by,  
Amid that solemn pillared hush arose  
From lips of kneeling thousands one great prayer  
Storming the Gates of Heaven ! *O Lord, our God,  
Heavenly Father, have mercy upon our Queen,  
To whom Thy far dispersed flock do fly  
In the anguish of their souls. Behold, behold,  
How many princes band themselves against her,  
How long Thy servant hath laboured to them for peace,  
How proudly they prepare themselves for battle !  
Arise, therefore ! Maintain Thine own cause,  
Judge Thou between her and her enemies !  
She seeketh not her own honour, but Thine,  
Not the dominions of others, but Thy truth, .  
Not bloodshed but the saving of the afflicted !  
O rend the heavens, therefore, and come down,  
Deliver Thy people !  
To vanquish is all one with Thee, by few  
Or many, want or wealth, weakness or strength.  
The cause is Thine, the enemies Thine, the afflicted  
Thine ! The honour, victory, and triumph*



*Thine! Grant her people now one heart, one mind,  
One strength. Give unto her councils and her captains  
Wisdom and courage strongly to withstand  
The forces of her enemies, that the fame  
And glory of Thy Kingdom may be spread  
Unto the ends of the world. Father, we crave  
This in Thy mercy, for the precious death  
Of Thy dear Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ!  
Amen.*

And as the dreadful dawn thro' mist-wreaths broke,  
And out of Plymouth Sound at last, with cheers  
Ringing from many a thousand throats, there struggled  
Six little ships, all that the night's long toil  
Had warped down to the sea (but leading them  
The ship of Drake) there rose one ocean-cry  
From all those worshippers—*Let God arise,  
And let His enemies be scattered!*

Under the leaden fogs of that new dawn,  
Empty and cold, indifferent as death,  
The sea heaved strangely to the seamen's eyes,  
Seeing all round them only the leaden surge  
Wrapped in wet mists or flashing here and there  
With crumbling white. Against the cold wet wind  
Westward the little ships of England beat  
With short tacks, close inshore, striving to win  
The windward station of the threatening battle  
That neared behind the veil. Six little ships,  
No more, beat Westward, even as all mankind  
Beats up against that universal wind  
Whereon like withered leaves all else is blown  
Down one wide way to death: the soul alone,  
Whether at last it wins, or faints and fails,  
Stems the dark tide with its intrepid sails.  
Close-hauled, with many a short tack, struggled and  
strained,  
North-west, South-west, the ships; but ever Westward  
gained

*The last two ships, the "Hulk" and the "Hulk",  
actually from the "Hulk" side to the "Hulk" side  
which happened to be the "Hulk" side of the "Hulk".*

Some little way with every tack ; and soon,  
While the prows plunged beneath the grey-gold noon,  
Lapped by the crackling waves, even as the wind  
Died down a little, in the mists behind  
Stole out from Plymouth Sound the struggling score  
Of ships that might not win last night to sea.  
They followed ; but the Six went on before,  
Not knowing, alone, for God and Liberty.

Now, as they tacked North-west, the sullen roar  
Of reefs crept out, or some strange bleating sound  
Of sheep upon the hills. South-west once more  
The bo'sun's whistle swung their bowsprits round ;

South-west until the long low lapping splash  
Was all they heard, of keels that still ran out  
Seaward, then with one muffled heave and crash  
Once more the whistles brought their sails about.

And now the noon began to wane ; the West  
With slow rich colours filled and shadowy forms,  
Dark curdling wreaths and fogs with crimsoned breast,  
And tangled zones of dusk like frozen storms,

Motionless, flagged with sunset, hulled with doom ;  
Motionless ? Nay, across the darkening deep  
Surely the whole sky moved its gorgeous gloom  
Onward ; and like the curtains of a sleep

The red fogs crumbled, mists dissolved away !  
There, like death's secret dawning thro' a dream,  
Great thrones of thunder dusked the dying day,  
And, higher, pale towers of cloud began to gleam.

There, in one heaven-wide storm, great masts and clouds  
Of sail crept slowly forth, the ships of Spain !  
From North to South, their tangled spars and shrouds  
Controlled the slow wind as with bit and rein ;

Onward they rode in insolent disdain  
 Sighting the little fleet of England there,  
 While o'er the sullen splendour of the main  
 Three solemn guns tolled all their host to prayer,  
 And their great ensign blazoned all the doom-fraught air.

The sacred standard of their proud crusade  
 Up to the mast-head of their flag-ship soared :  
 On one side knelt the Holy Mother-maid,  
 On one the crucified Redeemer poured  
 His blood, and all their kneeling hosts adored  
 Their saints, and clouds of incense heavenward streamed,  
 While pomp of cannonry and pike and sword  
 Down long sea-lanes of mocking menace gleamed,  
 And chant of priests rolled out o'er seas that darkly  
 dreamed.

*Who comes to fight for England? Is it ye,*  
*Six little straws that dance upon the foam?*  
 Ay, sweeping o'er the sunset-crimsoned sea  
 Let the proud pageant in its glory come,  
 Leaving the sunset like a hecatomb  
 Of souls whose bodies yet endure the chain!  
 Let slaves, by thousands, branded, scarred and dumb,  
 In those dark galleys grip their oars again,  
 And o'er the rolling deep bring on the pomp of Spain;—

Bring on the pomp of royal paladins  
 (For all the principedoms of the land are there!)  
 And for the gorgeous purple of their sins  
 The papal pomp bring on with psalm and prayer :  
 Nearer the splendour heaves ; can ye not hear  
 The rushing foam, not see the blazoned arms,  
 And black-faced hosts thro' leagues of golden air  
 Crowding the decks, muttering their beads and charms  
 To where, in furthest heaven, they thicken like locust-  
 swarms?

Bring on the pomp and pride of old Castille,  
Blazon the skies with royal Aragon,  
Beneath Oquendo let old ocean reel,  
The purple pomp of priestly Rome bring on ;  
And let her censers dusk the dying sun,  
The thunder of her banners on the breeze  
Following Sidonia's glorious galleon  
Deride the sleeping thunder of the seas,  
While twenty thousand warriors chant her litanies.

Lo, all their decks are kneeling ! Sky to sky  
Responds ! It is their solemn evening hour.  
SALVE REGINA, though the daylight die,  
SALVE REGINA, though the darkness lour ;  
Have they not still the kingdom and the power ?  
SALVE REGINA, hark, their thousands cry,  
From where like clouds to where like mountains tower  
Their crowded galleons looming far or nigh,  
SALVE REGINA, hark, what distant seas reply !

What distant seas, what distant ages hear ?  
Bring on the pomp ! the sun of Spain goes down :  
The moon but swells the tide of praise and prayer ;  
Bring on the world-wide pomp of her renown ;  
Let darkness crown her with a starrier crown,  
And let her watch the fierce waves crouch and fawn  
Round those huge hulks from which her cannon frown,  
While close inshore the wet sea-mists are drawn  
Round England's Drake : then wait, in triumph, for the  
dawn.

'The sun of Rome goes down ; the night is dark !  
Still are her thousands praying, still their cry  
Ascends from the wide waste of waters, hark !  
AVE MARIA, darker grows the sky !

AVE MARIA, *those about to die*

*Salute thee!* Nay, what wandering winds blaspheme  
With random gusts of chilling prophecy  
Against the solemn sounds that heavenward stream!  
The night is come at last. Break not the splendid dream.

But through the misty darkness, close inshore,  
North-west, South-west, and ever Westward strained  
The little ships of England, all night long,  
As down the coast the reddening beacons leapt,  
The crackle and lapping splash of tacking keels,  
The bo'suns' low sharp whistles and the whine  
Of ropes, mixing with many a sea-bird's cry  
Disturbed the darkness, waking vague swift fears  
Among the mighty hulks of Spain that lay  
Nearest, then fading through the mists inshore  
North-west, then growing again, but farther down  
Their ranks to Westward with each dark return  
And dark departure, till the rearmost rank  
Of grim sea-castles heard the swish and creak  
Pass plashing seaward thro' the wet sea-mists  
To windward now of all that monstrous host,  
Then heard no more than wandering sea-birds' cries  
Wheeling around their leagues of lanthorn-light,  
Or heave of waters, waiting for the dawn.

Dawn, everlasting and almighty dawn

Rolled o'er the waters, the grey mists were fled:  
See, in their reeking heaven-wide crescent drawn

Those masts and spars and cloudy sails, outspread  
Like one great sulphurous tempest soaked with red,

In vain withstand the march of brightening skies:  
The dawn sweeps onward and the night is dead,

And lo, to windward, what bright menace lies,  
What glory kindles now in England's wakening eyes?

There, on the glittering plains of open sea,  
To windward now, behind the fleets of Spain,  
Two little files of ships are tossing free,  
Free of the winds and of the wind-swept main :  
Were they not trapped ? Who brought them forth again,  
Free of the great new fields of England's war,  
With sails like blossoms shining after rain,  
And guns that sparkle to the morning star ?  
Drake !—first upon the deep that rolls to 'Trafalgar !

And Spain knows well that flag of fiery fame,  
Spain knows who leads those files across the sea ;  
Implacable, invincible, his name  
*El Draque*, creeps hissing through her ranks to lee ;  
But now she holds the rolling heavens in fee,  
His ships are few. *They surge across the foam,*  
*The hunt is up !* But need the mountains flee  
Or fear the snarling wolf-pack ? Let them come !  
They crouch, but dare not leap upon the flanks of Rome.

Nearer they come and nearer ! Nay, prepare !  
Close your huge ranks that sweep from sky to sky !  
Madness itself would shrink ; but Drake will dare  
Eternal hell ! Let the great signal fly—  
Close up your ranks ; *El Draque* comes down to die !  
*El Draque* is brave ! The vast sea-cities loom  
Thro' heaven : Spain spares one smile of chivalry,  
One wintry smile across her cannons' gloom  
As that frail fleet full-sail comes rushing tow'rds its doom.

Suddenly, as the wild change of a dream,  
Even as the Spaniards watched those lean sharp prows  
Leap straight at their huge hulks, watched well content,  
Knowing their foes, once grappled, must be doomed ;  
Even as they caught the rush and hiss of foam  
Across that narrow, dwindling gleam of sea,

And heard, abruptly close, the sharp commands  
And steady British answers, caught one glimpse  
Of bare-armed seamen waiting by their guns,  
The vision changed ! The ships of England swerved  
Swiftly—a volley of flame and thunder swept  
Blinding the buffeted air, a volley of iron  
From four sheer broadsides, crashing thro' a hulk  
Of Spain. She reeled, blind in the fiery surge  
And fury of that assault. So swift it seemed  
That as she heeled to leeward, ere her guns  
Trained on the foe once more, the sulphurous cloud  
That wrapped the sea, once, twice, and thrice again  
Split with red thunder-claps that rent and raked  
Her huge beams through and through. Ay, as she heeled  
To leeward still, her own grim cannon belched  
Their lava skyward, wounding the void air,  
And, as by miracle, the ships of Drake  
Were gone. Along the Spanish rear they swept  
From North to South, raking them as they went  
At close range, hardly a pistol-shot away,  
With volley on volley. Never Spain had seen  
Seamen or marksmen like to these who sailed  
Two knots against her one. They came and went,  
Suddenly neared or sheered away at will  
As if by magic, pouring flame and iron  
In four full broadsides thro' some Spanish hulk  
Ere one of hers burst blindly at the sky.  
Southward, along the Spanish rear they swept,  
Then swung about, and volleying sheets of flame,  
Iron, and death, along the same fierce road  
Littered with spars, reeking with sulphurous fumes,  
Returned, triumphantly rushing, all their sails  
Aloft, aloft, full-bellied with the wind.

Then, then, from sky to sky, one mighty surge  
Of baleful pride, huge wrath, stormy disdain,  
With shuddering clouds and towers of sail would urge  
Onward the heaving citadels of Spain,

Which dragged earth's thunders o'er the groaning main,  
 And held the panoplies of faith in fee,  
 Beating against the wind, struggling in vain  
 To close with that swift ocean-cavalry:  
 Spain had all earth in charge! Had England, then, the  
 sea?

Spain had the mountains—mountains flow like clouds  
 Spain had great kingdoms—kingdoms melt away!  
 Yet, in that crescent, army on army crowds,  
 How shall she fear what seas or winds can say?—  
 The seas that leap and shine round earth's decay,  
 The winds that mount and sing while empires fall,  
 And mountains pass like waves in the wind's way,  
 And dying gods thro' shuddering twilights call;  
 Had England, then, the sea that sweeps o'er one and all?

See, in gigantic wrath the *Rata* hurls  
 Her mighty prows round to the wild sea-wind:  
 The deep like one black maelstrom round her swirls  
 While great Recaldé follows hard behind:  
 Reeling, like Titans, thunder-blasted, blind,  
 They strive to cross the ships of England—yea,  
 Challenge them to the grapple, and only find  
 Red broadsides bursting o'er the bursting spray,  
 And England surging still along her windward way!

To windward still *Revenge* and *Raleigh* flash  
 And thunder, and the sea flames red between:  
 In vain against the wind the galleons crash  
 And plunge and pour blind volleys thro' the screen  
 Of rolling sulphurous clouds at dimly seen  
 Topsails that, to and fro, like sea-birds fly!  
 Ever to leeward the great hulks careen;  
 Their thousand cannon can but wound the sky,  
 While England's little *Rainbow* foams and flashes by.



Suddenly the flag-ship of Recaldé, stung  
 To fury it seemed, heeled like an avalanche  
 To leeward, then reeled out beyond the rest  
 Against the wind, alone, daring the foe  
 To grapple her. At once the little *Revenge*  
 With Drake's flag flying flashed at her throat,  
 And hardly a cable's-length away out-belched  
 Broadside on broadside, under those great cannon,  
 Crashing through five-foot beams, four shots to one,  
 While Howard and the rest swept to and fro  
 Keeping at deadly bay the rolling hulks  
 That looming like Leviathans now plunged  
 Desperately against the freshening wind  
 To rescue the great flag-ship where she lay  
 Alone, amid the cannonades of Drake,  
 Alone, like a volcanic island lashed  
 With crimson hurricanes, dinning the winds  
 With isolated thunders, flaking the skies  
 With wrathful lava, while great spars and blocks  
 Leapt through the cloudy glare and fell, far off,  
 Like small black stones into the hissing sea.

Oquendo saw her peril far away !

His rushing prow thro' heaven begins to loom,  
 Oquendo, first in all that proud array,

Hath heart the pride of Spain to reassume :  
 He comes ; the rolling seas are dusked with gloom

Of his great sails ! Now round him once again,  
 Thrust out your oars, ye mighty hulks of doom ;

Forward, with hiss of whip and clank of chain !  
 Let twice ten hundred slaves bring on the wrath of Spain !

Sidonia comes ! Toledo comes !—huge ranks  
 That rally against the storm from sky to sky,  
 As down the dark blood-rusted chain-locked planks  
 Of labouring galleys the dark slave-guards ply

Their knotted scourges, and the red flakes fly  
From bare scarred backs that quiver and heave once  
more,  
And slaves that heed not if they live or die  
Pull with numb arms at many a red-stained oar,  
Nor know the sea's dull crash from cannon's growing roar.

Bring on the wrath! From heaven to rushing heaven  
The white foam sweeps around their fierce array;  
In vain before their shattering crimson levin  
The ships of England flash and dart away:  
Not England's heart can hold that host at bay!  
See, a swift signal shoots along her line,  
Her ships are scattered, they fly, they fly like spray  
Driven against the wind by wrath divine,  
While, round Recaldé now, Sidonia's cannon shine.

The wild sea-winds with golden trumpets blaze!  
One wave will wash away the crimson stain  
That blots Recaldé's decks. Her first amaze  
Is over: down the Channel once again  
Turns the triumphant pageantry of Spain  
In battle-order, now. Behind her, far,  
While the broad sun sinks to the Western main,  
Glitter the little ships of England's war,  
And over them in heaven glides out the first white star.

The sun goes down: the heart of Spain is proud:  
Her censers fume, her golden trumpets blow!  
Into the darkening East with cloud on cloud  
Of broad-flung sail her huge sea-castles go:  
Rich under blazoned poops like rose-flushed snow  
Tosses the foam. Far off the sunset gleams:  
Her banners like a thousand sunsets glow,  
As down the darkening East the pageant streams,  
Full-fraught with doom for England, rigged with princely  
dreams.

Nay, "rigged with curses dark," as o'er the waves  
Drake watched them slowly sweeping into the gloom  
That thickened down the Channel, watched them go  
In ranks compact, roundels impregnable,  
With Biscay's bristling broad-beamed squadron drawn  
Behind for rear-guard. As the sun went down  
Drake flew the council-flag. Across the sea  
That gleamed still like a myriad-petalled rose  
Up to the little *Revenge* the pinnaces foamed.  
There, on Drake's powder-grimed escutcheoned poop  
They gathered, Admirals and great flag-captains,  
Hawkins, Frobisher, shining names and famous,  
And some content to serve and follow and fight  
Where duty called unknown, but heroes all.  
High on the poop they clustered, gazing East  
With faces dark as iron against the flame  
Of sunset, eagle-faces, iron lips,  
And keen eyes fiercely flashing as they turned  
Like sword-flames now, or dark and deep as night  
Watching the vast Armada slowly mix  
Its broad-flung sails with twilight where it dragged  
Thro' thickening heavens its curdled storm of clouds  
Down the wide darkening Channel.

"My Lord Howard,"  
Said Drake, "it seems we have but scarred the skins  
Of those huge hulks: the hour grows late for England.  
'Twere well to handle them again at once." A growl  
Of fierce approval answered; but Lord Howard  
Cried out, "Attack we cannot, save at risk  
Of our whole fleet. It is not death I fear,  
But England's peril. We have fought all day,  
Accomplished nothing! Half our powder is spent!  
I think it best to hang upon their flanks  
Till we be reinforced!"

"My lord," said Drake,  
"Had we that week to spare for which I prayed,  
And were we handling them in Spanish seas,  
We might delay. There is no choosing now."

Yon hulks of doom are steadfastly resolved  
On one tremendous path and solid end—  
To join their powers with Parma's thirty thousand  
(Not heeding our light horsemen of the sea),  
Then in one earthquake of o'erwhelming arms  
Roll Europe over England. They've not grasped  
The first poor thought which now and evermore  
Must be the sceptre of Britain, the steel trident  
Of ocean-sovereignty. That mighty fleet  
Invincible, impregnable, omnipotent,  
Must here and now be shattered, never be joined  
With Parma, never abase the wind-swept sea,  
With oaken roads for thundering legions  
To trample in the splendour of the sun  
From Europe to our island.

As for food,  
In yonder enemy's fleet there is food enough  
To feed a nation ; ay, and powder enough  
To split an empire. I will answer for it  
Ye shall not lack of either, nor for shot,  
Not though ye pluck them out of your own beams  
To feed your hungry cannon. Cast your bread  
Upon the waters. Think not of the Queen !  
She will not send it ! For she hath not known  
(How could she know ?) this wide new realm of hers,  
When we ourselves—her seamen—scarce have learnt  
What means this kingdom of the ocean-sea  
To England and her throne—food, life-blood, life !  
She could not understand who, when our ships  
Put out from Plymouth, hardly gave them store  
Of powder and shot to last three fighting days,  
Or rations even for those. Blame not the Queen,  
Who hath striven for England as no king hath fought  
Since England was a nation. Bear with me,  
For I must pour my heart before you now  
This one last time. Yon fishing-boats have brought  
Tidings how on this very day she rode  
Before her mustered pikes at Tilbury.

Methinks I see her riding down their lines  
High on her milk-white Barbary charger, hear  
Her voice—'My people, though my flesh be woman,  
My heart is of your kingly lion's breed :  
I come myself to lead you !' I see the sun  
Shining upon her armour, hear the voice  
Of all her armies roaring like one sea—  
*God save Elizabeth, our English Queen !*  
'God save her,' I say, too ; but still she dreams,  
As all too many of us—bear with me !—dream,  
Of Creçy, when our England's war was thus ;  
When we, too, hurled our hosts across the deep  
As now Spain dreams to hurl them on our isle.  
But now our war is otherwise. We claim  
The sea's command, and Spain shall never land  
One swordsman on our island. Blame her not,  
But look not to the Queen. The people fight  
This war of ours, not princes. In this hour  
God maketh us a people. We have seen  
Victories, never victory like to this,  
When in our England's darkest hour of need  
Her seamen, without wage, powder, or food,  
Are yet on fire to fight for her. Your ships  
Tossing in the great sunset of an Empire,  
Dawn of a sovereign people, are all manned  
By heroes, ragged, hungry, who will die  
Like flies ere long, because they have no food  
But turns to fever-breeding carrion  
Not fit for dogs. They are half-naked, hopeless  
Living, of any reward ; and if they die  
They die a dog's death. We shall reap the same  
While they—great God ! and all this cannot quench  
The glory in their eyes. They will be served  
Six at the mess of four, eking it out  
With what their own rude nets may catch by night,  
Silvering the guns and naked arms that haul  
Under the stars with silver past all price,  
While some small ship-boy in the black crow's nest

Watches across the waters for the foe.  
 My lord, it is a terrible thing for Spain  
 When poor men thus go out against her princes ;  
 For so God whispers 'Victory' in our ears,  
 I cannot dare to doubt it."

Once again

A growl of fierce approval answered him,  
 And Hawkins cried—"I stand by Francis Drake";  
 But Howard, clinging to his old-world order,  
 Yet with such manly strength as dared to rank  
 Drake's wisdom of the sea above his own,  
 Sturdily shook his head. "I dare not risk  
 A close attack. Once grappled we are doomed.  
 We'll follow on their trail no less, with Drake  
 Leading. Our oriflamme to-night shall be  
 His cresset and stern-lantern. Where that shines  
 We follow."

Drake, still thinking in his heart,—  
 "And if Spain be not shattered here and now  
 We are doomed no less," must even rest content  
 With that good vantage.

As the sunset died  
 Over the darkling emerald seas that swelled  
 Before the freshening wind, the pinnaces dashed  
 To their own ships ; and into the mind of Drake  
 There stole a plot that twitched his lips to a smile.  
 High on the heaving purple of the poop  
 Under the glimmer of firm and full-blown sails  
 He stood, an iron statue, glancing back  
 Anon at his stern-cresset's crimson flare,  
 The star of all the shadowy ships that plunged  
 Like ghosts amid the grey stream of his wake,  
 And all around him heard the low keen song  
 Of hidden ropes above the wail and creak  
 Of blocks and long low swish of cloven foam,  
 A keen rope-music in the formless night,  
 A harmony, a strong intent good sound,  
 Well-strung and taut, singing the will of man.

"Your oriflamme," he muttered,—“so you travail  
With sea-speech in the tongue of old Poitiers—  
Shall be my own stern-lantern. Watch it well,  
My good lord Howard.”

Over the surging seas  
The little *Revenge* went swooping on the trail,  
Leading the ships of England. One by one  
Out of the gloom before them slowly crept,  
Sinister gleam by gleam, like blood-red stars,  
The rearmost lanterns of the Spanish Fleet,  
A shaggy purple sky of secret storm  
Heaving from north to south upon the black  
Breast of the waters. Once again with lips  
Twitched to a smile, Drake suddenly bade them crowd  
All sail upon the little *Revenge*. She leapt  
Forward. Smiling he watched the widening gap  
Between the ships that followed and her light,  
Then as to those behind, its flicker must seem  
Wellnigh confused with those of Spain, he cried,  
“Now, master bo’sun, quench their oriflamme,  
Dip their damned cresset in the good Black Sea!  
The rearmost light of Spain shall lead them now,  
A little closer, if they think it ours.  
Pray God, they come to blows!”

Even as he spake  
His cresset-flare went out in the thick night :  
A fluttering as of blind bewildered moths  
A moment seized upon the shadowy ships  
Behind him, then with crowded sail they steered  
Straight for the rearmost cresset-flare of Spain.

## BOOK XII.

MEANWHILE, as in the gloom he slipped aside  
Along the Spanish ranks, waiting the crash  
Of battle, suddenly Drake became aware  
Of strange sails bearing up into the wind  
Around his right, and thought, "the Armada strives  
To weather us in the dark." Down went his helm,  
And all alone the little *Revenge* gave chase,  
Till as the moon crept slowly forth, she stood  
Beside the ghostly ships, only to see  
Bewildered Flemish merchantmen, amazed  
With fears of Armageddon—such vast shrouds  
Had lately passed them on the rolling seas.  
Down went his helm again, with one grim curse  
Upon the chance that led him thus astray;  
And down the wind the little *Revenge* once more  
Swept on the trail. Fainter and fainter now  
Glared the red beacons on the British coasts,  
And the wind slackened and the glimmering East  
Greyed and reddened, yet Drake had not regained  
Sight of the ships. When the full glory of dawn  
Dazzled the sea, he found himself alone,  
With one huge galleon helplessly drifting  
A cable's-length away. Around her prow,  
*Nuestra Señora del Rosario*,  
Richly emblazoned, gold on red, proclaimed  
The flagship of great Valdes, of the fleet  
Of Andalusia, captain-general. She,  
Last night, in dark collision with the hulks



Of Spain, had lost her foremast. Through the night  
Her guns, long rank on deadly rank, had kept  
All enemies at bay. Drake summoned her  
Instantly to surrender. She returned  
A scornful answer from the glittering poop  
Where two-score officers crowned the golden sea  
And stained the dawn with blots of richer colour  
Loftily clustered in the glowing sky,  
Doubled with cramoisy velvet, wreathed  
With golden chains, blazing with jewelled swords  
And crusted poignards. "What proud haste was this?"  
They asked, glancing at their huge tiers of cannon  
And crowded decks of swarthy soldiery;  
"What madman in yon cockle-shell defied  
Spain?"

"Tell them it is El Draque," he said, "who lacks  
The time to parley; therefore it will be well  
They strike at once, for I am in great haste."  
There, at the sound of that renowned name,  
Without a word down came their blazoned flag!  
Like a great fragment of the dawn it lay  
Crumpled upon their decks. . . .

Into the soft bloom and Italian blue  
Of sparkling, ever-beautiful Torbay,  
Belted as with warm Mediterranean crags,  
The little *Revenge* foamed with her mighty prize,  
A prize indeed—not for the casks of gold  
Drake split in the rich sunlight and poured out  
Like dross amongst his men, but in her hold  
Lay many tons of powder, worth their weight  
In rubies now to Britain. Into the hands  
Of swarthy Brixham fishermen he gave  
Prisoners and prize, then—loaded stem to stern  
With powder and shot—their swiftest trawlers flew  
Like falcons following a thunder-cloud  
Behind him, as with crowded sail he rushed  
On England's trail once more. Like a caged lion

Drake paced his deck, praying he yet might reach  
The fight in time ; and ever the warm light wind  
Slackened. Not till the sun was half-way fallen  
Once more crept out in front those dusky thrones  
Of thunder, heaving on the smooth bright sea  
From North to South with Howard's clustered fleet  
Like tiny clouds, becalmed, not half a mile  
Behind the Spaniards. For the breeze had failed  
Their blind midnight pursuit ; and now attack  
Seemed hopeless. Even as Drake drew nigh, the last  
Breath of the wind sank. One more day had flown,  
Nought was accomplished ; and the Armada lay  
Some leagues of golden sea-way nearer now  
To its great goal. The sun went down : the moon  
Rose glittering. Hardly a cannon-shot apart  
The two fleets lay becalmed upon the silver  
Swell of the smooth night-tide. The hour had come  
For Spain to strike. The ships of England drifted  
Helplessly, at the mercy of those great hulks  
Oared by their thousand slaves.

Onward they came,  
Swinging suddenly in tremendous gloom  
Over the silver seas. But even as Drake,  
With eyes on fire at last for his last fight,  
Measured the distance ere he gave the word  
To greet it with his cannon, suddenly  
The shining face of the deep began to shiver  
With dusky patches : the doomed English sails  
Quivered and, filling smart from the North-east,  
The little *Revenge* rushed down their broken line  
Signalling them to follow, and ere they knew  
What miracle had saved them, they all sprang  
Their luff and ran large out to sea. For now  
The Armada lay to windward, and to fight  
Meant to be grappled and overwhelmed ; but dark  
Within the mind of Drake, a fiercer plan  
Already had shaped itself.

“They fly ! They fly !”

Rending the heavens from twice ten thousand throats  
A mighty shout rose from the Spanish Fleet.  
Over the moonlit waves their galleons came  
Towering, crowding, plunging down the wind  
In full chase, while the tempter, Drake, laughed low  
To watch their solid battle-order break  
And straggle. When once more the golden dawn  
Dazzled the deep, the labouring galleons lay  
Scattered by their unequal speed. The wind  
Veered as the sun rose. Once again the ships  
Of England lay to windward. Down swooped Drake  
Where like a mountain the *San Marcos* heaved  
Her giant flanks alone, having out-sailed  
Her huge companions. Then the sea-winds blazed  
With broadsides. Two long hours the sea flamed red  
All round her. One by one the Titan ships  
Came surging to her rescue, and met the buffet  
Of battle-thunders, belching iron and flame ;  
Nor could they pluck her forth from that red chaos  
Till great Oquendo hurled his mighty prows  
Crashing athwart those thunders, and once more  
Gathered into unshakeable battle-order  
The whole Armada raked the reeking seas.  
Then up the wind the ships of England sheered  
Once more, and one more day drew to its close,  
With little accomplished, half their powder spent,  
And all the Armada moving as of old,  
From sky to sky one heaven-wide zone of storm,  
(Though some three galleons out of all their host  
Laboured woundily) down the darkening Channel  
And all night long on England's guardian heights  
The beacons reddened, and all the next long day  
The impregnable Armada never swerved  
From its tremendous path. In vain did Drake,  
Frobisher, Hawkins, Howard, greatest names  
In all our great sea-history, hover and dart  
Like falcons round the mountainous array.  
Till now, as night fell and they lay abreast

Of the Isle of Wight, once more the council flag  
Flew from the little *Revenge*. With iron face  
Thrust close to Howard's, and outstretched iron arm,  
Under the stars Drake pointed down the coast  
Where the red beacons flared. "The shoals," he hissed,  
"The shoals from Owers to Spithead and the net  
Of channels yonder in Portsmouth Roads. At dawn  
They'll lie to leeward of the Invincible  
Fleet!"

Swiftly, in mighty sweeping lines Drake set  
Before the council his fierce battle-plan  
To drive the Armada down upon the banks  
And utterly shatter it—stroke by well-schemed stroke  
As he unfolded there his vital plot  
And touched their dead cold warfare into life  
Where plan before was none, he seemed to tower  
Above them, clad with the deep night of stars;  
And those that late would rival knew him now,  
In all his great simplicity, their king,  
One of the gods of battle, England's Drake,  
A soul that summoned Cæsar from his grave,  
And swept with Alexander o'er the deep.

So when the dawn thro' rolling wreaths of cloud  
Struggled, and all the waves were molten gold,  
The heart of Spain exulted, for she saw  
The little fleet of England cloven in twain  
As if by some strange discord. A light breeze  
Blew from the ripening East; and, up against it,  
Urged by the very madness of defeat,  
Or so it seemed, one half the British fleet  
Drew nigh, towed by their boats, to challenge the vast  
Tempest-winged heaving citadels of Spain,  
At last to the murderous grapple; while far away  
Their other half, led by the flag of Drake,  
Stood out to sea, as if to escape the doom  
Of that sheer madness, for the light wind now  
Could lend them no such wings to hover and swoop

As heretofore. Nearer the mad ships came  
Towed by their boats, till now upon their right  
To windward loomed the Fleet Invincible  
With all its thunder-clouds, and on their left  
To leeward, gleamed the perilous white shoals  
With their long level lightnings under the cliffs  
Of England, from the green glad garden of Wight  
To the Owers and Selsea Bill. Right on they came,  
And suddenly the wrench of thundering cannon  
Shook the vast hulks that towered above them. Red  
Flamed the blue sea between. Thunder to thunder  
Answered, and still the ships of Drake sped out  
To the open sea. Sidonia saw them go,  
Furrowing the deep that like a pale-blue shield  
Lay diamond-dazzled now in the full light.  
Rich was the omen of that day for Spain,  
The feast-day of Sidonia's patron-saint !  
And the priests chanted and the trumpets blew  
Triumphantly ! A universal shout  
Went skyward from the locust-swarming decks,  
A shout that rent the golden morning clouds  
From heaven to menacing heaven, as castle to castle  
Flew the great battle-signal, and like one range  
Of moving mountains, those almighty ranks  
Swept down upon the small forsaken ships !  
The lion's brood was in the imperial nets  
Of Spain at last. Onward the mountains came  
With all their golden clouds of sail and flags  
Like streaming cataracts ; all their glorious chasms  
And glittering steeps, echoing, re-echoing,  
Calling, answering, as with the herald winds  
That blow the golden trumpets of the morning  
From Skiddaw to Helvellyn. In the midst  
The great *San Martin* surged with heaven-wide press  
Of proudly billowing sail ; and yet once more  
Slowly, solemnly, like another dawn  
Up to her mast-head soared in thunderous gold  
The sacred standard of their last crusade ;

While round a hundred prows that heaved thro' heaven  
Like granite cliffs, their black wet shining flanks,  
And swept like moving promontories, rolled  
The splendid long-drawn thunders of the foam,  
And flashed the untamed white lightnings of the sea  
Back to a morn unhalyarded of man,  
Back to the unleashed sun and blazoned clouds  
And azure sky—the unfettered flag of God.

Like one huge moving coast-line on they came  
Crashing, and closed the ships of England round  
With one fierce crescent of thunder and sweeping flame,  
One crimson scythe of Death, whose long sweep drowned  
The eternal ocean with its mighty sound,  
From heaven to heaven, one roar, one glitter of doom,  
While out to the sea-line's blue remotest bound  
The ships of Drake still fled, and the red fume  
Of battle thickened and shrouded shoal and sea with gloom.

The distant sea, the close white menacing shoals  
Are shrouded ! And the lion's brood fight on !  
And now death's very midnight round them rolls ;  
Rent is the flag that late so proudly shone :  
The red decks reel and their last hope seems gone !  
Round them they still keep clear one ring of sea :  
It narrows ; but the lion's brood fight on,  
Ungrappled still, still fearless and still free,  
While the white menacing shoals creep slowly out to lee.

Now through the red rents of each fire-cleft cloud,  
High o'er the British blood-greased decks flash out  
Thousands of swarthy faces, crowd on crowd  
Surging, with one tremendous hurricane shout  
*On, to the grapple !* and still the grim redoubt  
Of the oaken bulwarks rolls them back again,  
As buffeted waves that shatter in the furious bout  
When cannonading cliffs meet the full main  
And hurl it back in smoke —so Britain hurls back Spain ;

Hurls her back, only to see her return,  
 Darkening the heavens with billow on billow of sail :  
 Round that huge storm the waves like lava burn,  
 The daylight withers, and the sea-winds fail !  
 Seamen of England, what shall now avail  
 Your naked arms ? Before those blasts of doom  
 The sun is quenched, the very sea-waves quail :  
 High overhead their triumphing thousands loom,  
 When hark ! what low deep guns to windward suddenly  
 boom ?

What low deep strange new thunders far away  
 Respond to the triumphant shout of Spain ?  
 Is it the wind that shakes their giant array ?  
 Is it the deep wrath of the rising main ?  
 Is it—*El Draque* ? *El Draque* ! Ay, shout again,  
 His thunders burst upon your windward flanks ;  
 The shoals creep out to leeward ! Is it plain  
 At last, what earthquake heaves your herded ranks  
 Huddled in huge dismay tow'rds those white foam-swept  
 banks ?

Plain, it was plain at last, what cunning lured,  
 What courage held them over the jaws o' the pit,  
 Till Drake could hurl them down. The little ships  
 Of Howard and Frobisher, towed by their boats,  
 Slipped away in the smoke, while out at sea  
 Drake, with a gale of wind behind him, crashed  
 Volléy on volley into the helpless rear  
 Of Spain and drove it down, huddling the whole  
 Invincible Fleet together upon the verge  
 Of doom. One awful surge of stormy wrath  
 Heaved thro' the struggling citadels of Spain.  
 From East to West their desperate signal flew,  
 And like a drove of bullocks, with the foam  
 Flecking their giant sides, they staggered and swerved,  
 Careening tow'rds the shallows as they turned,  
 Then in one wild stampede of sheer dismay

Rushed, tacking seaward, while the grey sea-plain  
Smoked round them, and the cannonades of Drake  
Raked their wild flight ; and the crusading flag,  
Tangled in one black maze of crashing spars,  
Whirled downward like the pride of Lucifer  
From heaven to hell.

Out tow'rds the coasts of France  
They plunged, narrowly weathering the Ower banks ;  
Then, once again, they formed in ranks compact,  
Roundels impregnable, wrathfully bent at last  
Never to swerve again from their huge path  
And solid end—to join with Parma's host,  
And hurl the whole of Europe on our isle.  
Another day was gone, much powder spent ;  
And, while Lord Howard exulted and conferred  
Knighthoods on his brave seamen, Drake alone  
Knew that his mighty plan, in spite of all,  
Had failed, knew that wellnigh his last great chance  
Was lost of wrecking the Spaniards ere they joined  
Parma. The night went by, and the next day,  
With scarce a visible scar the Invincible Fleet  
Drew onwards tow'rds its goal, unshakeable now  
In that grim battle-order. Beacons flared  
Along the British coast, and pikes flashed out  
All night, and a strange dread began to grip  
The heart of England, as it seemed the might  
Of seamen most renowned in all the world  
Checked not that huge advance. Yet at the heart  
Of Spain no less there clung a vampire fear  
And strange foreboding, as the next day passed  
Quietly, and behind her all day long  
The shadowy ships of Drake stood on her trail  
Quietly, patiently, as death or doom,  
Unswerving and implacable.

While the sun  
Sank thro' long crimson fringes on that eve,  
The fleets were passing Calais and the wind  
Blew fair behind them. A strange impulse seized



Spain to shake off those bloodhounds from her trail,  
 And suddenly the whole Invincible Fleet  
 Anchored, in hope the following wind would bear  
 The ships of England past and carry them down  
 To leeward. But their grim insistent watch  
 Was ready; and though their van had wellnigh crashed  
 Into the rear of Spain, in the golden dusk,  
 They, too, a cannon-shot away, at once  
 Anchored, to windward still.

Quietly heaved  
 The golden sea in that tremendous hour  
 Fraught with the fate of Europe and mankind,  
 As yet once more the flag of council flew,  
 And Hawkins, Howard, Frobisher, and Drake  
 Gathered together upon the little *Revenge*,  
 While like a triumphing fire the news was borne  
 To Spain, already, that the Invincible Fleet  
 Had reached its end, ay, and "that great black dog  
 Sir Francis Drake" was writhing now in chains  
 Beneath the torturer's hands.

High on his poop  
 He stood, a granite rock, above the throng  
 Of captains, there amid the breaking waves  
 Of clashing thought and swift opinion,  
 Silent, gazing where now the cool fresh wind  
 Blew steadily up the terrible North Sea  
 Which rolled under the clouds into a gloom  
 Unfathomable. Once only his lips moved  
 Half-consciously, breathing those mighty words,  
*The clouds His chariot!* Then, suddenly, he turned  
 And looked upon the little flock of ships  
 That followed on the fleet of England, sloops  
 Helpless in fight. These, manned by the brave zeal  
 Of many a noble house, from hour to hour  
 Had plunged out from the coast to join his flag.  
 "Better if they had brought us powder and food  
 Than sought to join us thus," he had growled; but now  
 "Lord God," he cried aloud, "they'll light our road

To victory yet!" And in great sweeping strokes  
Once more he drew his mighty battle-plan  
Before the captains. In the thickening gloom  
They stared at his grim face as at a man  
Risen from hell, with all the powers of hell  
At his command, a face tempered like steel  
In the everlasting furnaces, a rock  
Of adamant, while with a voice that blent  
With the ebb and flow of the everlasting sea  
He spake, and at the low deep menacing words  
Monotonous with the unconquerable  
Passion and level strength of his great soul  
They shuddered; for the man seemed more than man,  
And from his iron lips resounded doom  
As from the lips of cannon, doom to Spain,  
Inevitable, unconquerable doom.

And through that mighty host of Spain there crept  
Cold winds of fear, as to the darkening sky  
Once more from lips of kneeling thousands swept  
The vespers of an Empire—one vast cry,  
SALVE REGINA! God, what wild reply  
Hissed from the clouds in that dark hour of dreams?  
AVE MARIA, *those about to die*  
*Salute thee!* See, what ghostly pageant streams  
Above them? What thin hands point down like pale  
moonbeams?

Thick as the ghosts that Dante saw in hell  
Whirled on the blast thro' boundless leagues of pain,  
Thick, thick as wind-blown leaves innumerable,  
In the Inquisition's yellow robes her slain  
And tortured thousands, dense as the red rain  
That wellnigh quenched her fires, went hissing by  
With twisted shapes, raw from the racks of Spain,  
SALVE REGINA!—rushing thro' the sky,  
And pale hands pointing down and lips that mocked her  
cry.

Ten thousand times ten thousand!—what are these

That are arrayed in yellow robes and sweep  
Between your prayers and God like phantom seas

Propheying over your masts? Could Rome not keep  
The keys? Who loosed these dead to break your sleep?

SALVE REGINA, cry, yea, cry aloud,  
AVE MARIA! Ye have sown: shall ye not reap?

SALVE REGINA! Christ, what fiery cloud  
Suddenly rolls to windward, high o'er mast and shroud?

Are hell-gates burst at last? For the black deep

To windward burns with streaming crimson fires!  
Over the wild strange waves, they shudder and creep

Nearer—strange smoke-wreathed masts and spars, red  
spires

And blazing hulks, vast roaring blood-red pyres,

Fierce as the flames ye fed with flesh of men  
Amid the imperial pomp and chanting choirs

Of Alva—from El Draque's red hand again  
Sweep the wild fire-ships down upon the Fleet of Spain.

Onward before the freshening wind they come

Full fraught with all the terrors, all the bale  
That flamed so long for the delight of Rome,

The shrieking fires that struck the sunlight pale,  
The avenging fires at last! Now what avail

Your thousand ranks of cannon? Swift, cut free,  
Cut your scorched cables! Cry, reel backward, quail,

Crash your huge huddled ranks together, flee!  
Behind you roars the fire, before—the dark North Sea!

Dawn, everlasting and omnipotent

Dawn rolled in crimson o'er the spar-strewn waves,  
As the last trumpet shall in thunder roll

O'er heaven and earth and ocean. Far away,  
The ships of Spain, great ragged piles of gloom

And shaggy splendour, leaning to the North  
Like sun-shot clouds confused, or rent apart

In scattered squadrons, furiously plunged,  
 Burying their mighty prows i' the broad grey rush  
 Of smoking billowy hills, or heaving high  
 Their giant bowsprits to the wandering heavens,  
 Labouring in vain to return, struggling to lock  
 Their far-flung ranks anew, but drifting still  
 To leeward, driven by the ever-increasing storm  
 Straight for the dark North Sea. Hard by there lurched  
 One gorgeous galleon on the ravening shoals,  
 Feeding the white maw of the famished waves  
 With gold and purple webs from kingly looms  
 And spilth of world-wide empires. Howard, still  
 Planning to pluck the Armada plume by plume,  
 Swooped down upon that prey and swiftly engaged  
 Her desperate guns; while Drake, our ocean-king,  
 Knowing the full worth of that doom-fraught hour,  
 Glanced neither to the left nor right, but stood  
 High on his poop, with calm implacable face  
 Gazing as into eternity, and steered  
 The crowded glory of his dawn-flushed sails  
 In superb onset, straight for the great fleet  
 Invincible; and after him the main  
 Of England's fleet, knowing its captain now,  
 Followed, and with them rushed—from sky to sky  
 One glittering charge of wrath—the storm's white waves,  
 The twenty thousand foaming chariots  
 Of God.

None but the everlasting voice  
 Of him who fought at Salamis might sing  
 The fight of that dread Sabbath. Not mankind  
 Waged it alone. War raged in heaven that day,  
 Where Michael and his angels drave once more  
 The hosts of darkness ruining down the abyss  
 Of chaos. Light against darkness, Liberty  
 Against all dark old despotism, unsheathed  
 The sword in that great hour. Behind the strife  
 Of men embattled deeps beyond all thought  
 Moved in their awful panoply, as move

Silent, invisible, swift, under the clash  
Of waves and flash of foam, huge ocean-glooms  
And vast reserves of inappellable power.  
The bowsprits ranked on either fore-front seemed  
But spear-heads of those dread antagonists  
Invisible : the shuddering sails of Spain  
Dusk with the shadow of death, the sunward sails  
Of England full-fraught with the breath of God.  
Onward the ships of England and God's waves  
Triumphantly charged, glittering companions,  
And poured their thunders on the extreme right  
Of Spain, whose giant galleons as they lurched  
Heavily to the roughening sea and wind  
With all their grinding, wrenching cannon, worked  
On rolling platforms by the helpless hands  
Of twenty thousand soldiers, without skill  
In stormy seas, rent the indifferent sky  
Or tore the black troughs of the swirling deep  
In vain, while volley on volley of flame and iron  
Burst thro' their four-foot beams, fierce raking blasts  
From ships that came and went on wings of the wind  
All round their mangled bulk, scarce a pike's thrust  
Away, sweeping their decks from stem to stern  
(Between the rush and roar of the great green waves)  
With crimson death, rending their timbered towns  
And populous floating streets into wild-squares  
Of slaughter and devastation ; driving them down,  
Huddled on their own centre, cities of shame  
And havoc, in fiery forests of tangled wrath,  
With hurricanes of huge masts and swarming spars  
And multitudinous decks that heaved and sank  
Like earthquake-smitten palaces, when doom  
Comes, with one stride, across the pomp of kings.  
All round them shouted the everlasting sea,  
Burst in white thunders on the streaming poops  
And blinded fifty thousand eyes with spray.  
Once, as a gorgeous galleon, drenched with blood  
Began to found and settle, a British captain

Called from his bulwarks, bidding her fierce crew  
Surrender and come aboard. Straight through the heart  
A hundred muskets answered that appeal.  
*Sink or destroy!* The deadly signal flew  
From mast to mast of England. Once, twice, thrice,  
A huge sea-castle heaved her haggled bulk  
Heavenward, and with a cry that rent the heavens  
From all her crowded decks, and one deep roar  
As of a cloven world or the dark surge  
Of chaos yawning, sank : the swirling slopes  
Of the sweeping billowy hills for a moment swarmed  
With struggling insect-men, sprinkling the foam  
With tossing arms ; then the indifferent sea  
Rolled its grey smoking waves across the place  
Where they had been. Here a great galleasse poured  
Red rivers through her scuppers and torn flanks,  
And there a galleon, wrapped in creeping fire,  
Suddenly like a vast volcano split  
Asunder, and o'er the vomiting sulphurous clouds  
And spouting spread of crimson, flying spars  
And heads torn from their trunks and scattered limbs  
Leapt, hideous gouts of death, against the glare.  
Hardly the thrust of a pike away, the ships  
Of England flashed and swerved, till in one mass  
Of thunder-blasted splendour and shuddering gloom  
Those gorgeous floating citadels huddled and shrank  
Their towers, and all the glory of dawn that rolled  
And burned along the tempest of their banners  
Withered, as on a murderer's face the light  
Withers before the accuser. All their proud  
Castles and towers and heaven-wide clouds of sail  
Shrank to a darkening horror, like the heart  
Of Evil, plucked from midnight's fiercest gloom,  
With all its curses quivering and alive ;  
A horror of wild masts and tangled spars,  
Like some great kraken with a thousand arms  
Torn from the filthiest cavern of the deep,  
Writhing, and spewing forth its venomous fumes

On every side. *Sink or destroy!*—all day  
The deadly signal flew; and ever the sea  
Swelled higher, and the flashes of the foam  
Broadened and leapt and spread as a wild white fire  
That flourishes with the wind; and ever the storm  
Drave the grim battle onward to the wild  
Menace of the dark North Sea. At set of sun,  
Even as below the sea-line the broad disc  
Sank like a red-hot cannon-ball through scurf  
Of seething molten lead, the *Santa Maria*  
Uttering one cry that split the heart of heaven  
Went down with all hands, roaring into the dark.  
Hardly five rounds of shot were left to Drake!  
Gun after gun fell silent, as the night  
Deepened—"Yet we must follow them to the North,"  
He cried, "or they'll return yet to shake hands  
With Parma! Come, we'll put a brag upon it,  
And hunt them onward as we lacked for nought!"  
So, when across the swinging smoking seas,  
Grey and splendid and terrible broke the day  
Once more, the flying Invincible fleet beheld  
Upon their weather-beam, and dogging them  
Like their own shadow, the dark ships of Drake,  
Unswerving and implacable. Ever the wind  
And sea increased; till now the heaving deep  
Swelled all around them into sulky hills  
And rolling mountains, whose majestic crests,  
Like wild white flames far blown and savagely flickering  
Swept thro' the clouds; and, on their vanishing slopes,  
Past the pursuing fleet began to swirl  
Scores of horses and mules, drowning or drowned,  
Cast overboard to lighten the wild flight  
Of Spain, and save her water-casks, a trail  
Telling of utmost fear. And ever the storm  
Roared louder across the leagues of rioting sea,  
Driving her onward like a mighty stag  
Chased by the wolves. Off the dark Firth of Forth  
At last, Drake signalled and lay head to wind,

Watching. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand,"  
He muttered, as, for a moment close at hand,  
Caught in some league-wide whirlpool of the sea,  
The mighty galleons crowded and towered and plunged  
Above him on the huge o'erhanging billows,  
As if to crash down on his decks ; the next,  
A mile of ravening sea had swept between  
Each of those wind-whipt straws and they were gone,  
With all their tiny shrivelling scrolls of sail,  
Through roaring deserts of embattled death,  
Where like a hundred thousand chariots charged  
With lightnings and with thunders, the great deep  
Hurled them away to the North. From sky to sky  
One blanching bursting storm of infinite seas  
Followed them, broad white cataracts, hills that grasped  
With struggling Titan hands at reeling heavens,  
And roared their doom-fraught greetings from Cape Wrath  
Round to the Bloody Foreland.

There should the yeast

Of foam receive the purple of many kings,  
And the grim gulfs devour the blood-bought gold  
Of Aztecs and of Incas, and the reefs,  
League after league, bristle with mangled spars,  
And all along their coasts the murderous kerns  
Of Catholic Ireland strip the gorgeous silks  
And chains and jewel-encrusted crucifixes  
From thousands dead, and slaughter thousands more  
With gallow-glass axes as they blindly crept  
Forth from the surf and jagged rocks to seek  
Pity of their own creed.

To meet that doom

Drake watched their sails go shrivelling, till the last  
Flicker of spars vanished as a skeleton leaf  
Upon the blasts of winter, and there was nought  
But one wide wilderness of splendour and gloom  
Under the northern clouds.

"Not unto us,"

Cried Drake, "not unto us—but unto Him



Who made the sea, belongs our England now !  
Pray God that heart and mind and soul we prove  
Worthy among the nations of this hour  
And this great victory, whose ocean fame  
Shall wash the world with thunder till that day  
When there is no more sea, and the strong cliffs  
Pass like a smoke, and the last peal of it  
Sounds thro' the trumpet."

So, with close-hauled sails,  
Over the rolling triumph of the deep,  
Lifting their hearts to heaven, they turned back home.

# THE ENCHANTED ISLAND

## AND OTHER POEMS.

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### MIST IN THE VALLEY.

#### I.

MIST in the valley, weeping mist  
Beset my homeward way.  
No gleam of rose or amethyst  
Hallowed the parting day ;  
A shroud, a shroud of awful gray  
Wrapped every woodland brow,  
And drooped in crumbling disarray  
Around each wintry bough.

#### II.

And closer round me now it clung  
Until I scarce could see  
The stealthy pathway over-hung  
By silent tree and tree  
Which floated in that mystery  
As—poised in waveless deeps—  
Branching in worlds below the sea,  
The gray sea-forest sleeps.

## III.

Mist in the valley, mist no less  
Within my groping mind !  
The stile swam out : a wilderness  
Rolled round it, gray and blind.  
A yard in front, a yard behind,  
So strait my world was grown,  
I stooped to win once more some kind  
Glimmer of twig or stone.

## IV.

I crossed and lost the friendly stile  
And listened. Never a sound  
Came to me. Mile on mile on mile  
It seemed the world around  
Beneath some infinite sea lay drowned  
With all that e'er drew breath ;  
Whilst I, alone, had strangely found  
A moment's life in death.

## V.

A universe of lifeless gray  
Oppressed me overhead.  
Below, a yard of clinging clay  
With rotting foliage red  
Glimmered. The stillness of the dead,  
Hark !—was it broken now  
By the slow drip of tears that bled  
From hidden heart or bough.

## VI.

Mist in the valley, mist no less  
That muffled every cry  
Across the soul's gray wilderness  
Where faith lay down to die ;

Buried beyond all hope was I,  
Hope had no meaning there :  
A yard above my head the sky  
Could only mock at prayer.

## VII.

E'en as I groped along, the gloom  
Suddenly shook at my feet !  
O, strangely as from a rending tomb  
In resurrection, sweet  
Swift wings tumultuously beat  
Away ! I paused to hark—  
O, birds of thought, too fair, too fleet  
To follow across the dark !

## VIII.

Yet, like a madman's dream, there came  
One fair swift flash to me  
Of distances, of streets a-flame  
With joy and agony,  
And further yet, a moon-lit sea  
Foaming across its bars,  
And further yet, the infinity  
Of wheeling suns and stars,

## IX.

And further yet . . . O, mist of suns,  
I grope amidst your light,  
O, further yet, what vast response  
From what transcendent height ?  
Wild wings that burst thro' death's dim night  
I can but pause and hark ;  
For O, ye are too swift, too white,  
To follow across the dark !

## X.

Mist in the valley, yet I saw,  
And in my soul I knew  
The gleaming City whence I draw  
The strength that then I drew,  
My misty pathway to pursue  
With steady pulse and breath  
Through these dim forest-ways of dew  
And darkness, life and death.

## A SONG OF THE PLOUGH.

## I.

*(Morning.)*

IDLE, comfortless, bare,  
 The broad bleak acres lie :  
 The ploughman guides the sharp ploughshare  
 Steadily nigh.

The big plough-horses lift  
 And climb from the marge of the sea,  
 And the clouds of their breath on the clear wind drift  
 Over the fallow lea.

Streaming up with the yoke,  
 Brown as the sweet-smelling loam,  
 Thro' a sun-swept smother of sweat and smoke  
 The two great horses come.

Up thro' the raw cold morn  
 They trample and drag and swing ;  
 And my dreams are waving with ungrown corn  
 In a far-off spring.

It is my soul lies bare  
 Between the hills and the sea :  
 Come, ploughman Life, with thy sharp ploughshare,  
 And plough the field for me.

## II.

*(Evening.)*

Over the darkening plain  
As the stars regain the sky,  
Steals the chime of an unseen rein  
Steadily nigh.

Lost in the deepening red  
The sea has forgotten the shore :  
The great dark steeds with their muffled tread  
Draw near once more.

To the furrow's end they sweep  
Like a sombre wave of the sea,  
Lifting its crest to challenge the deep  
Hush of Eternity.

Still for a moment they stand,  
Massed on the sun's red death,  
A surge of bronze, too great, too grand,  
To endure for more than a breath.

Only the billow and stream  
Of muscle and flank and mane  
Like darkling mountain-cataracts gleam  
Gripped in a Titan's rein.

Once more from the furrow's end  
They wheel to the fallow lea,  
And down the muffled slope descend  
To the sleeping sea.

And the fibrous knots of clay,  
And the sun-dried clots of earth  
Cleave, and the sunset cloaks the gray  
Waste and the stony dearth !

O, broad and dusky and sweet,  
The sunset covers the weald ;  
But my dreams are waving with golden wheat  
In a still strange field.

My soul, my soul lies bare,  
Between the hills and the sea ;  
Come, ploughman Death, with thy sharp ploughshare,  
And plough the field for me.



## THE BANNER.

Who in the gorgeous vanguard of the years  
With wingéd helmet glistens, let him hold  
Ere he pluck down this banner, crying "It bears  
An old device"; for, though it seem the old,

It is the new! No rent shroud of the past,  
But its transfigured spirit that still shines  
Triumphantly before the foremost lines,  
Even from the first prophesying the last.

And whoso dreams to pluck it down shall stand  
Bewildered, while the great host thunders by;  
And he shall show the rent shroud in his hand  
And "Lo, I lead the van!" he still shall cry;

While leagues away, the spirit-banner shines  
Rushing in triumph before the foremost lines.

## RANK AND FILE.

## I.

DRUM-TAPS! Drum-taps! Who is it marching,  
 Marching past in the night? Ah, hark,  
 Draw your curtains aside and see  
 Endless ranks of the stars o'er-arching  
 Endless ranks of an army marching,  
 Marching out of the measureless dark,  
 Marching away to Eternity.

## II.

See the gleam of the white sad faces  
 Moving steadily, row on row,  
 Marching away to their hopeless wars:  
 Drum-taps, drum-taps, where are they marching?  
 Terrible, beautiful, human faces,  
 Common as dirt, but softer than snow,  
 Coarser than clay, but calm as the stars.

## III.

Is it the last rank readily, steadily  
 Swinging away to the unknown doom?  
 Ere you can think it, the drum-taps beat  
 Louder, and here they come marching, marching,  
 Great new level locked ranks of them readily  
 Steadily swinging out of the gloom,  
 Marching endlessly down the street.

## IV.

Unregarded imperial regiments  
White from the roaring intricate places  
Deep in the maw of the world's machine,  
Well content, they are marching, marching,  
Unregarded imperial regiments,  
Ay, and there are those terrible faces  
Great world-heroes that might have been.

## V.

Hints and facets of One—the Eternal,  
Faces of grief, compassion and pain,  
Faces of hunger, faces of stone,  
Faces of love and of labour, marching,  
Changing facets of One—the Eternal,  
Streaming up thro' the wind and the rain,  
All together and each alone.

## VI.

You that doubt of the world's one Passion,  
You for whose science the stars are a-stray,  
Hark—to their orderly thunder-tread!  
These, in the night, with the stars are marching  
One to the end of the world's one Passion!  
You that have taken their Master away,  
Where have you laid Him, living or dead?

## VII.

You whose laws have hidden the One Law,  
You whose searchings obscure the goal,  
You whose systems from chaos begun,  
Chance-born, order-less, hark, they are marching,  
Hearts and tides and stars to the One Law,  
Measured and orderly, rhythmical, whole,  
Multitudinous, welded and one.

## VIII.

Split your threads of the seamless purple,  
Round you marches the world-wide host,  
Round your skies is the marching sky,  
Out in the night there's an army marching,  
Clothed with the night's own seamless purple,  
Making death for the King their boast,  
Marching straight to Eternity.

## IX.

What do you know of the shot-riddled banners  
Royally surging out of the gloom,  
You whose denials their souls despise?  
Out in the night they are marching, marching!  
Treasure your wisdom, and leave them their banners!  
Then—when you follow them down to the tomb  
Pray for one glimpse of the faith in their eyes.

## X.

Pray for one gleam of the white sad faces,  
Moving steadily, row on row,  
Marching away to their hopeless wars  
Doomed to be trodden like dung, but marching,  
Terrible, beautiful human faces,  
Common as dirt, but softer than snow,  
Coarser than clay, but calm as the stars.

## XI.

What of the end? Will your knowledge escape it?  
What of the end of their dumb dark tears?  
You who mock at their faith and sing,  
Look, for their ragged old banners are marching  
Down to the end—will your knowledge escape it?—  
Down to the end of a few brief years!  
What should they care for the wisdom you bring.

## XII.

Count as they pass, their hundreds, thousands,  
Millions, marching away to a doom  
Younger than London, older than Tyre!  
Drum-taps, drum-taps, where are they marching,  
Regiments, nations, empires, marching?  
Down thro' the jaws of a world-wide tomb,  
Doomed or ever they sprang from the mire!

## XIII.

Doomed to be shovelled like dung to the midden,  
Trodden and kneaded as clay in the road,  
Father and little one, lover and friend,  
Out in the night they are marching, marching,  
Doomed to be shovelled like dung to the midden,  
Bodies that bowed beneath Christ's own load,  
Love that—marched to the self-same end.

## XIV.

What of the end?—O, not of your glory,  
Not of your wealth or your fame that will live  
Half as long as this pellet of dust!—  
Out in the night there's an army marching,  
Nameless, noteless, empty of glory,  
Ready to suffer and die and forgive,  
Marching onward in simple trust,

## XV.

Wearing their poor little toy love-tokens  
Under the march of the terrible skies!  
Is it a jest for a God to play?—  
Whose is the jest of these millions marching,  
Wearing their poor little toy love-tokens,  
Waving their voicelessly grand good-byes,  
Secretly trying, sometimes, to pray.

## XVI.

Dare you dream their trust in Eternity  
Broken, O you to whom prayers are vain,  
You who dream that their God is dead?  
Take your answer—these millions marching  
Out of Eternity, into Eternity,  
These that smiled "We shall meet again,"  
Even as the life from their loved one fled.

## XVII.

This is the answer, not of the sages,  
Not of the loves that are ready to part,  
Ready to find their oblivion sweet!  
Out in the night there's an army marching,  
Men that have toiled thro' the endless ages,  
Men of the pit and the desk and the mart,  
Men that remember, the men in the street,

## XVIII.

These that into the gloom of Eternity  
Stream thro' the dream of this lamp-starred town  
London, an army of clouds to-night!  
These that of old came marching, marching,  
Out of the terrible gloom of Eternity,  
Bowing their heads at Rameses' frown,  
Streaming away thro' Babylon's light;

## XIX.

These that swept at the sound of the trumpet  
Out thro' the night like gonfaloned clouds,  
Exiled hosts when the world was Rome,  
Tossing their tattered old eagles, marching  
Down to sleep till the great last trumpet,  
London, Nineveh, rend your shrouds,  
Rally the legions and lead them home,

## XX.

Lead them home with their glorious faces  
Moving steadily, row on row  
Marching up from the end of wars,  
Out of the Valley of Shadows, marching,  
Terrible, beautiful, human faces,  
Common as dirt, but softer than snow,  
Coarser than clay, but calm as the stars,

## XXI.

Marching out of the endless ages,  
Marching out of the dawn of time,  
Endless columns of unknown men,  
Endless ranks of the stars o'er-arching,  
Endless ranks of an army marching  
Numberless out of the numberless ages,  
Men out of every race and clime,  
Marching steadily, now as then.

## THE SKY-LARK CAGED.

## I.

BEAT, little breast, against the wires,  
 Strive, little wings and misted eyes,  
 Which one wild gleam of memory fires  
 Beseeching still the unfettered skies,  
 Whither at dewy dawn you sprang  
 Quivering with joy from this dark earth and sang.

## II.

And still you sing—your narrow cage  
 Shall set at least your music free!  
 Its rapturous wings in glorious rage  
 Mount and are lost in liberty,  
 While those who caged you creep on earth  
 Blind prisoners from the hour that gave them birth.

## III.

Sing! The great City surges round.  
 Blinded with light, thou canst not know.  
 Dream! 'Tis the fir-woods' windy sound  
 Rolling a psalm of praise below.  
 Sing, o'er the bitter dust and shame,  
 And touch us with thine own transcendent flame.



## IV.

Sing, o'er the City dust and slime ;  
Sing, o'er the squalor and the gold,  
The greed that darkens earth with crime,  
The spirits that are bought and sold.  
O, shower the healing notes like rain,  
And lift us to the height of grief again.

## V.

Sing! The same music swells your breast,  
And the wild notes are still as sweet  
As when above the fragrant nest  
And the wide billowing fields of wheat  
You soared and sang the livelong day,  
And in the light of heaven dissolved away.

## VI.

The light of heaven! Is it not here?  
One rapture, one ecstatic joy,  
One passion, one sublime despair,  
One grief which nothing can destroy,  
You—though your dying eyes are wet  
Remember, 'tis our blunted hearts forget

## VII.

Beat, little breast, still beat, still beat,  
Strive, misted eyes and tremulous wings ;  
Swell, little throat, your *Sweet! Sweet! Sweet!*  
Thro' which such deathless memory rings :  
Better to break your heart and die,  
Than, like your gaolers, to forget your sky.

## THE LOVERS' FLIGHT.

## I.

COME, the dusk is lit with flowers !  
 Quietly take this guiding hand :  
 Little breath to waste is ours  
 On the road to lovers' land.  
 Time is in his dungeon-keep !  
 Ah, not thither, lest he hear,  
 Starting from his old gray sleep,  
 Rosy feet upon the stair.

## II.

Ah, not thither, lest he heed  
 Ere we reach the rusty door !  
 Nay, the stairways only lead  
 Back to his dark world once more :  
 There's a merrier way we know  
 Leading to a lovelier night—  
 See, your casement all a-glow  
 Diamonding the wonder-light.

## III.

Fling the flowery lattice wide,  
 Let the silken ladder down,  
 Swiftly to the garden glide  
 Glimmering in your long white gown,

Rosy from your pillow, sweet,  
Come, unsandalled and divine ;  
Let the blossoms stain your feet  
And the stars behold them shine.

## IV.

Swift, our pawing palfreys wait,  
And the page—Dan Cupid—frets,  
Holding at the garden gate  
Reins that chime like castanets,  
Bits a-foam with fairy flakes  
Flung from seas whence Venus rose :  
Come, for Father Time awakes  
And the star of morning glows.

## V.

Swift—one satin foot shall sway  
Half a heart-beat in my hand,  
Swing to stirrup and swift away  
Down the road to lovers' land :  
Ride—the moon is dusky gold,  
Ride—our hearts are young and warm,  
Ride—the hour is growing old,  
And the next may break the charm.

## VI.

Swift, ere we that thought the song  
Full—for others—of the truth,  
We that smiled, contented, strong,  
Dowered with endless wealth of youth,  
Find that like a summer cloud  
Youth indeed has crept away,  
Find the robe a clinging shroud  
And the hair be-sprent with gray.

## VII.

Ride—we'll leave it all behind,  
All the turmoil and the tears,  
All the mad vindictive blind  
Yelping of the heartless years !  
Ride—the ringing world 's in chase,  
Yet we've slipped old Father Time,  
By the love-light in your face  
And the jingle of this rhyme.

## VIII.

Ride—for still the hunt is loud !  
Ride—our steeds can hold their own !  
Yours, a satin sea-wave, proud,  
Queen, to be your living throne,  
Glittering with the foam and fire  
Churned from seas whence Venus rose,  
Tow'rd the gates of our desire  
Gloriously burning flows.

## IX.

He, with streaming flanks a-smoke,  
Needs no spur of blood-stained steel :  
Only that soft thudding stroke  
Once, o' the little satin heel,  
Drives his mighty heart, your slave,  
Bridled with these bells of rhyme,  
Onward, like a crested wave  
Thundering out of hail of Time.

## X.

On, till from a rosy spark  
Fairy-small as gleams your hand,  
Broadening as we cleave the dark,  
Dawn the gates of lovers' land,

Nearing, sweet, till breast and brow  
Lifted through the purple night  
Catch the deepening glory now  
And your eyes the wonder-light.

## XI.

E'en as tow'rd your face I lean  
Swooping nigh the gates of bliss  
I the king and you the queen  
Crown each other with a kiss  
Riding, soaring like a song  
Burn we tow'rds the heaven above,  
You the sweet and I the strong  
And in both the fire of love.

## XII.

Ride—though now the distant chase  
Knows that we have slipped old Time,  
Lift the love-light of your face,  
Shake the bridle of this rhyme,  
See, the flowers of night and day  
Streaming past on either hand,  
Ride into the eternal May,  
Ride into the lovers' land.

## THE ROCK POOL.

## I.

BRIGHT as a fallen fragment of the sky,  
 Mid shell-encrusted rocks the sea-pool shone,  
 Glassing the sunset-clouds in its clear heart,  
 A small enchanted world enwalled apart  
     In diamond mystery,  
 Content with its own dreams, its own strict zone  
 Of urchin woods, its fairy bights and bars,  
 Its daisy-disked anemones and rose-feathered stars.

## II.

Forsaken for a-while by that deep roar  
 Which works in storm and calm the eternal will,  
 Drags down the cliffs, bids the great hills go by  
 And shepherds their multitudinous pageantry,—  
     Here, on this ebb-tide shore  
 A jewelled bath of beauty, sparkling still,  
 The little sea-pool smiled away the sea,  
 And slept on its own plane of bright tranquillity.

## III.

A self-sufficing soul, a pool in trance,  
 Un-stirred by all the spirit-winds that blow  
 From o'er the gulfs of change, content, ere yet  
 On its own crags, which rough peaked limpets fret

The last rich colours glance,  
Content to mirror the sea-bird's wings of snow,  
Or feel in some small creek, ere sunset fails,  
A tiny Nautilus hoist its lovely purple sails ;

## IV.

And, furrowing into pearl that rosy bar,  
Sail its own soul from fairy fringe to fringe,  
Lured by the twinkling prey 'twas born to reach  
In its own pool, by many an elfin beach  
Of jewels, adventuring far  
Through the last mirrored cloud and sunset-tinge  
And past the rainbow-dripping cave where lies  
The dark green pirate-crab at watch with beaded eyes,

## V.

Or fringed Medusa floats like light in light,  
Medusa, with the loveliest of all fays  
Pent in its irised bubble of jellied sheen,  
Trailing long ferns of moon-light, shot with green  
And crimson rays and white,  
Waving ethereal tendrils, ghostly sprays,  
Daring the deep, dissolving in the sun,  
The vanishing point of life, the light whence life begun,

## VI.

Poised between life, light, time, eternity,  
So tinged with all, that in its delicate brain  
Kindling it as a lamp with her bright wings  
Day-long, night-long, young Ariel sits and sings  
Echoing the lucid sea,  
Listening it echo her own unearthly strain,  
Watching through lucid walls the world's rich tide,  
One light, one substance with her own, rise and subside.

## VII.

And over soft brown woods, limpid, serene,

Puffing its fans the Nautilus went its way,  
And from a hundred salt and weedy shelves  
Peered little hornéd faces of sea-elves :

The prawn darted, half-seen,  
Thro' watery sunlight, like a pale green ray,  
And all around, from soft green waving bowers,  
Creatures like fruit out-crept from fluted shells like  
flowers.

## VIII.

And, over all, that glowing mirror spread

The splendour of its heaven-reflecting gleams,  
A level wealth of tints, calm as the sky  
That broods above our own mortality :

The temporal seas had fled,  
And ah, what hopes, what fears, what mystic dreams  
Could ruffle it now from any deeper deep?  
Content in its own bounds it slept a changeless sleep.

## IX.

Suddenly, from that heaven beyond belief,

Suddenly, from that world beyond its ken,  
Dashing great billows o'er its rosy bars,  
Shivering its dreams into a thousand stars,

Flooding each sun-dried reef  
With waves of colour, (as once, for mortal men  
Bethesda's angel) with blue eyes, wide and wild,  
Naked into the pool there stepped a little child.

## X.

Her red-gold hair against the far green sea

Blew thickly out : her slender golden form  
Shone dark against the richly waning west  
As with one hand she splashed her glistening breast,



Then waded up to her knee  
And frothed the whole pool into a fairy storm ! . . .  
So, stooping through our skies, of old, there came  
Angels that once could set this world's dark pool a-flame,

## XI.

From which the seas of faith have ebbd away,  
Leaving the lonely shore too bright, too bare,  
While mirrored softly in the smooth wet sand  
A deeper sunset sees its blooms expand  
But all too phantom-fair,  
Between the dark brown rocks and sparkling spray  
Where the low ripples pleaded, shrank and sighed,  
And tossed a moment's rainbow heavenward ere they  
died.

## XII.

Stoop, starry souls, incline to this dark coast,  
Where all too long, too faithlessly, we dream.  
Stoop to the world's dark pool, its crags and scars,  
Its yellow sands, its rosy harbour-bars,  
And soft green wastes that gleam  
But with some glorious drifting god-like ghost  
Of cloud, some vaguely passionate crimson stain :  
Rend the blue waves of heaven, shatter our sleep again !

## THE ISLAND HAWK.

(A SONG FOR THE FIRST LAUNCHING OF HIS MAJESTY'S  
AERIAL NAVY.)

## I.

*Chorus—*

*Ships have swept with my conquering name  
Over the waves of war,  
Swept thro' the Spaniards' thunder and flame  
To the splendour of Trafalgar :  
On the blistered decks of their great renown,  
In the wind of my storm-beat wings,  
Hawkins and Hawke went sailing down  
To the harbour of deep-sea kings !  
By the storm-beat wings of the hawk, the hawk,  
Bent beak and pitiless breast,  
They clove their way thro' the red sea-fray :  
Who wakens me now to the quest ?*

## II.

Hushed are the whimpering winds on the hill,  
Dumb is the shrinking plain,  
And the songs that enchanted the woods are still  
As I shoot to the skies again !  
Does the blood grow black on my fierce bent beak,  
Does the down still cling to my claw ?  
Who brightened these eyes for the prey they seek ?  
Life, I follow thy law !  
*For I am the hawk, the hawk, the hawk !  
Who knoweth my pitiless breast ?  
Who watcheth me sway in the wild wind's way ?  
Flee—flee—for I quest, I quest.*

## III.

As I glide and glide with my peering head,  
Or swerve at a puff of smoke,  
Who watcheth my wings on the wind outspread,  
Here—gone—with an instant stroke?  
Who toucheth the glory of life I feel  
As I buffet this great glad gale,  
Spire and spire to the cloud-world, wheel,  
Loosen my wings and sail?  
*For I am the hawk, the island hawk,  
Who knoweth my pitiless breast?  
Who watcheth me sway in the sun's bright way?  
Flee—flee—for I quest, I quest.*

## IV.

Had they given me "Cloud-cuckoo-city" to guard  
Between mankind and the sky,  
Tho' the dew might shine on an April sward,  
Iris had ne'er passed by!  
Swift as her beautiful wings might be  
From the rosy Olympian hill,  
Had Epops entrusted the gates to me  
Earth were his kingdom still.  
*For I am the hawk, the archer, the hawk!  
Who knoweth my pitiless breast?  
Who watcheth me sway in the wild wind's way?  
Flee—flee—for I quest, I quest.*

## V.

My mate in the nest on the high bright tree  
Blazing with dawn and dew,  
She knoweth the gleam of the world and the glee  
As I drop like a bolt from the blue:

She knoweth the fire of the level flight  
As I skim, close, close to the ground,  
With the long grass lashing my breast and the bright  
Dew-drops flashing around.

*She watcheth the hawk, the hawk, the hawk  
(O, the red-blotched eggs in the nest !)  
Watcheth him sway in the sun's bright way ;  
Flee—flee—for I quest, I quest.*

## VI.

She builded her nest on the high bright wold,  
She was taught in a world afar,  
The lore that is only an April old  
Yet old as the evening star ;  
Life of a far off ancient day  
In an hour unhooded her eyes ;  
In the time of the budding of one green spray  
She was wise as the stars are wise.

*Brown flower of the tree of the hawk, the hawk,  
On the old elm's burgeoning breast,  
She watcheth me sway in the wild wind's way :  
Flee—flee—for I quest, I quest.*

## VII.

Spirit and sap of the sweet swift Spring,  
Fire of our island soul,  
Burn in her breast and pulse in her wing  
While the endless ages roll ;  
Avatar—she—of the perilous pride  
That plundered the golden West,  
Her glance is a sword, but it sweeps too wide  
For a rumour to trouble her rest.

*She goeth her glorious way, the hawk,  
She nurseth her brood alone :  
She will not swoop for an owlet's whoop,  
She hath calls and cries of her own.*

## VIII.

There was never a dale in our isle so deep

That her wide wings were not free

To soar to the sovran heights and keep

Sight of the rolling sea :

Is it there, is it here in the rolling skies,

The realm of her future fame?

Look once, look once in her glittering eyes,

Ye shall find her the same, the same.

*Up to the skies with the hawk, the hawk,*

*As it was in the days of old !*

*Ye shall sail once more, ye shall soar, ye shall sour*

*To the new-found realms of gold.*

## IX.

She hath ridden on white Arabian steeds

Thro' the ringing English dells,

For the joy of a great queen, hunting in state,

To the music of golden bells ;

A queen's fair fingers have drawn the hood

And tossed her aloft in the blue,

A white hand eager for needless blood ;

I hunt for the needs of two.

*Yet I am the hawk, the hawk, the hawk !*

*Who knoweth my pitiless breast ?*

*Who watcheth me sway in the sun's bright way ?*

*Flee—flee—for I quest, I quest.*

## X.

Who fashioned her wide and splendid eyes

That have stared in the eyes of kings ?

With a silken twist she was looped to their wrist :

She has clawed at their jewelled rings !

Who flung her first thro' the crimson dawn  
To pluck him a prey from the skies,  
When the love-light shone upon lake and lawn  
In the valleys of Paradise?

*Who fashioned the hawk, the hawk, the hawk,  
Bent beak and pitiless breast?*

*Who watcheth him sway in the wild wind's way?  
Flee—flee—for I quest, I quest.*

## XI.

Is there ever a song in all the world  
Shall say how the quest began  
With the beak and the wings that have made us kings  
And cruel—almost—as man?

The wild wind whimpers across the heath  
Where the sad little tufts of blue  
And the red-stained gray little feathers of death  
Flutter! *Who fashioned us? Who?*

*Who fashioned the scimitar wings of the hawk,  
Bent beak and arrowy breast?*

*Who watcheth him sway in the sun's bright way?  
Flee—flee—for I quest, I quest.*

## XII.

Linnet and woodpecker, red-cap and jay,  
Shriek that a doom shall fall  
One day, one day, on my pitiless way  
From the sky that is over us all;  
But the great blue hawk of the heavens above  
Fashioned the world for his prey,—  
King and queen and hawk and dove,  
We shall meet in his clutch that day;

*Shall I not welcome him, I, the hawk?*

*Yea, cry, as they shrink from his claw,*

*Cry, as I die, to the unknown sky,*

*Life, I follow thy law!*

## XIII.

*Chorus—*

*Ships have swept with my conquering name . . .*

*Over the world and beyond,*

*Hark! Bellerophon, Marlborough, Thunderer,*

*Condor, respond!—*

*On the blistered decks of their dread renown,*

*In the rush of my storm-beat wings,*

*Hawkins and Hawke went sailing down*

*To the glory of deep-sea kings!*

*By the storm-beat wings of the hawk, the hawk,*

*Bent beak and pitiless breast,*

*They clove their way thro' the red sea-fray!*

*Who wakens me now to the quest.*

## THE ADMIRAL'S GHOST.

I TELL you a tale to-night  
 Which a seaman told to me,  
 With eyes that gleamed in the lanthorn light  
 And a voice as low as the sea.

You could almost hear the stars  
 Twinkling up in the sky,  
 And the old wind woke and moaned in the spars,  
 And the same old waves went by,

Singing the same old song  
 As ages and ages ago,  
 While he froze my blood in that deep-sea night  
 With the things that he seemed to know.

A bare foot pattered on deck ;  
 Ropes creaked ; then—all grew still,  
 And he pointed his finger straight in my face  
 And growled, as a sea-dog will.

“Do ’ee know who Nelson was ?  
 That pore little shrivelled form  
 With the patch on his eye and the pinned-up sleeve  
 And a soul like a North Sea storm ?

“Ask of the Devonshire men !  
 They know, and they’ll tell you true ;  
 He wasn’t the pore little chawed-up chap  
 That Hardy thought he knew.



"He wasn't the man you think !  
His patch was a dern disguise !  
For he knew that they'd find him out, d'you see,  
If they looked him in both his eyes.

"He was twice as big as he seemed ;  
But his clothes were cunningly made.  
He'd both of his hairy arms all right !  
The sleeve was a trick of the trade.

"You've heard of sperrits, no doubt ;  
Well, there's more in the matter than that !  
But he wasn't the patch and he wasn't the sleeve,  
And he wasn't the laced cocked-hat.

"*Nelson was just—a Ghost !*  
You may laugh ! But the Devonshire men  
They knew that he'd come when England called,  
And they know that he'll come again.

"I'll tell you the way it was  
(For none of the landsmen know),  
And to tell it you right, you must go a-starn  
Two hundred years or so.

. . . . .

"The waves were lapping and slapping  
The same as they are to-day ;  
And Drake lay dying aboard his ship  
In Nombre Dios Bay.

"The scent of the foreign flowers  
Came floating all around ;  
'But I'd give my soul for the smell o' the pitch,'  
Says he, 'in Plymouth Sound.

"'What shall I do,' he says,  
'When the guns begin to roar,  
An' England wants me, and me not there  
To shatter 'er foes once more ?'

"(You've heard what he said, maybe,  
But I'll mark you the p'int's again ;  
For I want you to box your compass right  
And get my story plain.)

" 'You must take my drum,' he says,  
    ' To the old sea-wall at home ;  
And if ever you strike that drum,' he says,  
    ' Why, strike me blind, I'll come !

" ' If England needs me, dead  
    Or living, I'll rise that day !  
I'll rise from the darkness under the sea  
    Ten thousand miles away.'

" That's what he said ; and he died ;  
    An' his pirates, listenin' roun',  
With their crimson doublets and jewelled swords  
    That flashed as the sun went down,

" They sewed him up in his shroud  
    With a round-shot top and toe,  
To sink him under the salt sharp sea  
    Where all good seamen go.

" They lowered him down in the deep,  
    And there in the sunset light  
They boomed a broadside over his grave,  
    As meanin' to say ' Good-night.'

" They sailed away in the dark  
    To the dear little isle they knew ;  
And they hung his drum by the old sea-wall  
    The same as he told them to.

. . . . .

" Two hundred years went by,  
    And the guns began to roar,  
And England was fighting hard for her life,  
    As ever she fought of yore.

“ ‘It’s only my dead that count,’  
She said, as she says to-day ;  
‘It isn’t the ships and it isn’t the guns  
’Ull sweep Trafalgar’s Bay.’

“ D’you guess who Nelson was ?  
You may laugh, but it’s true as true !  
There was more in that pore little chawed-up chap  
Than ever his best friend knew.

“ The foe was creepin’ close,  
In the dark, to our white-cliffed isle ;  
They were ready to leap at England’s throat,  
When—O, you may smile, you may smile ;

“ But—ask of the Devonshire men ;  
For they heard in the dead of night  
The roll of a drum, and they saw *him* pass  
On a ship all shining white.

“ He stretched out his dead cold face  
And he sailed in the grand old way !  
The fishes had taken an eye and an arm,  
But he swept Trafalgar’s Bay.

“ Nelson—was Francis Drake !  
O, what matters the uniform,  
Or the patch on your eye or your pinned-up sleeve,  
If your soul’s like a North Sea storm ? ”

## EDINBURGH.

## I.

City of mist and rain and blown grey spaces,  
 Dashed with wild wet colour and gleam of tears,  
 Dreaming in Holyrood halls of the passionate faces  
 Lifted to one Queen's face that has conquered the years,  
 Are not the halls of thy memory haunted places?  
 Cometh there not as a moon (where the blood-rust sears  
 Floors a-flutter of old with silks and laces),  
 Gliding, a ghostly Queen, thro' a mist of tears?

## II.

Proudly here, with a loftier pinnacled splendour,  
 Throned in his northern Athens, what spells remain  
 Still on the marble lips of the Wizard, and render  
 Silent the gazer on glory without a stain!  
 Here and here, do we whisper, with hearts more tender,  
 Tusitala wandered thro' mist and rain;  
 Rainbow-eyed and frail and gallant and slender,  
 Dreaming of pirate-isles in a jewelled main.

## III.

Up the Canongate climbeth, cleft asunder  
 Raggedly here, with a glimpse of the distant sea  
 Flashed through a crumbling alley, a glimpse of wonder,  
 Nay, for the City is throned on Eternity!  
 Hark! from the soaring castle a cannon's thunder  
 Closeth an hour for the world and an æon for me,  
 Gazing at last from the martial heights whereunder  
 Deathless memories roll to an ageless sea.

## IN A RAILWAY CARRIAGE.

THREE long isles of sunset-cloud.

Poised in an ocean of gold,  
Floated away in the west  
As the long train southward rolled ;

And through the gleam and shade of the panes,  
While meadow and wood went by,  
Across the streaming earth  
We watched the steadfast sky.

Dark before the westward window,  
Heavy and bloated, rolled  
The face of a drunken woman  
Nodding against the gold ;

Dark before the infinite glory,  
With bleared and leering eyes,  
It stupidly lurched and nodded  
Against the tender skies.

*What had ye done to her, masters of men,  
That her head should be bowed down thus—  
Thus for your golden vespers,  
And deepening angelus ?*

Dark, besotted, malignant, vacant,  
Slobbering, wrinkled, old,  
Weary and wickedly smiling,  
She nodded against the gold.

Pitiful, loathsome, maudlin, lonely,  
Her moist, inhuman eyes  
Blinked at the flies on the window,  
And could not see the skies.

As a beast that turns and returns to a mirror  
And will not see its face,  
Her eyes rejected the sunset,  
Her soul lay dead in its place,

Dead in the furrows and folds of her flesh  
As a corpse lies lapped in the shroud :  
Silently floated beside her  
The isles of sunset-cloud.

*What had ye done to her, years upon years,  
That her head should be bowed down thus—  
Thus for your golden vespers,  
And deepening angelus ?*

Her nails were blackened and split with labour,  
Her back was heavily bowed ;  
Silently floated beside her  
The isles of sunset-cloud.

Over their tapering streaks of lilac  
In breathless depths afar,  
Bright as the tear of an angel  
Glittered a lonely star.

While the hills and the streams of the world went  
past us,  
And the long train roared and rolled  
Southward, and dusk was falling,  
She nodded against the gold.

## AN EAST-END COFFEE-STALL.

DOWN the dark alley a ring of orange light  
 Glows. God, what leprous tatters of distress,  
 Droppings of misery, rags of Thy loneliness  
 Quiver and heave like vermin, out of the night !

Like crippled rats, creeping out of the gloom,  
 O Life, for one of thy terrible moments there,  
 Lit by the little flickering yellow flare,  
 Faces that mock at life and death and doom,

Faces that long, long since have known the worst,  
 Faces of women that have seen the child  
 Waste in their arms, and strangely, terribly, smiled  
 When the dark nipple of death has eased its thirst ;

Faces of men that once, though long ago,  
 Saw the faint light of hope, though far away,—  
 Hope that, at end of some tremendous day,  
 They yet might reach some life where tears could flow ;

Faces of our humanity, ravaged, white,  
 Wrenched with old love, old hate, older despair,  
 Steal out of vile filth-dropping dens to stare  
 On that wild monst'rance of a naphtha light.

They crowd before the stall's bright altar-rail,  
 Grotesque, and sacred, for that light's brief span,  
 And all the shuddering darkness cries, "All hail,  
 Daughters and Sons of Man !"

See, see, once more, though all their souls be dead,  
They hold it up, triumphantly hold it up,  
They feel, they warm their hands upon the Cup;  
Their crapulous hands, their claw-like hands break Bread!

See, with lean faces rapturously a-glow  
For a brief while they dream and munch and drink;  
Then, one by one, once more, silently slink  
Back, back into the gulping mist. They go,

One by one, out of the ring of light!  
They creep, like crippled rats, into the gloom,  
Into the fogs of life and death and doom,  
Into the night, the immeasurable night.



## RED OF THE DAWN.

## I.

THE Dawn peered in with blood-shot eyes  
 Pressed close against the cracked old pane.  
 The garret slept : the slow sad rain  
 Had ceased : grey fogs obscured the skies ;  
 But Dawn peered in with haggard eyes.

## II.

All as last night ? The three-legged chair,  
 The bare walls and the tattered bed,  
 All !—but for those wild flakes of red  
 (And Dawn, perhaps, had splashed them there !)  
 Round the bare walls, the bed, the chair.

## III.

'Twas here, last night, when winds were loud,  
 A ragged singing-girl, she came  
 Out of the tavern's glare and shame,  
 With some few pence—for she was proud—  
 Came home to sleep, when winds were loud.

## IV.

And she sleeps well ; for she was tired !  
That huddled shape beneath the sheet  
With knees up-drawn, no wind or sleet  
Can wake her now ! Sleep she desired ;  
And she sleeps well, for she was tired.

## V.

And there was one that followed her  
With some unhappy curse called "love":  
Last night, though winds beat loud above,  
She shrank ! Hark, on the creaking stair,  
What stealthy footstep followed her ?

## VI.

But now the Curse, it seemed, had gone !  
The small tin-box, wherein she hid  
Old childish treasures, had burst its lid,  
Dawn kissed her doll's cracked face. It shone  
Red-smeared, but laughing—*the Curse is gone.*

## VII.

So she sleeps well : she does not move ;  
And on the wall, the chair, the bed,  
Is it the Dawn that splashes red,  
High as the text where *God is Love*  
Hangs o'er her head ? She does not move.

## VIII.

The clock dictates its old refrain :  
All else is quiet ; or, far away,  
Shaking the world with new-born day,  
There thunders past some mighty train :  
The clock dictates its old refrain.

## IX.

The Dawn peers in with blood-shot eyes :  
The crust, the broken cup are there !  
She does not rise yet to prepare  
Her scanty meal. God does not rise  
And pluck the blood-stained sheet from her ;  
But Dawn peers in with haggard eyes.

## THE DREAM-CHILD'S INVITATION.

## I.

ONCE upon a time !—Ah, now the light is burning dimly,  
 Peterkin is here again : he wants another tale !  
 Don't you hear him whispering—*The wind is in the*  
*chimley,*  
*The ottoman's a treasure-ship, we'll all set sail ?*

## II.

All set sail ? No, the wind is very loud to-night :  
 The darkness on the waters is much deeper than of  
 yore,  
 Yet I wonder—hark, he whispers—if the little streets are  
 still as bright  
 In old Japan, in old Japan, that happy haunted shore.

## III.

I wonder—hush, he whispers—if perhaps the world will  
 wake again  
 When Christmas brings the stories back from where  
 the skies are blue,  
 Where clouds are scattering diamonds down on every  
 cottage window-pane,  
 And every boy's a fairy prince, and every tale is true.

## IV.

There the sword Excalibur is thrust into the dragon's  
throat,  
Evil there is evil, black is black, and white is white :  
There the child triumphant hurls the villain spluttering  
into the moat ;  
There the captured princess only waits the peerless  
knight.

## V.

Fairyland is gleaming there beyond the Sherwood Forest  
trees,  
There the City of the Clouds has anchored on the  
plain  
All her misty vistas and slumber-rosy palaces  
(*Shall we not, ah, shall we not, wander there again ?*)

## VI.

"Happy ever after" there, the lights of home a welcome  
fling  
Softly thro' the darkness as the star that shone of old,  
Softly over Bethlehem and o'er the little cradled King  
Whom the sages worshipped with their frankincense and  
gold.

## VII.

Once upon a time—perhaps a hundred thousand years  
ago—  
Whisper to me, Peterkin, I have forgotten when !  
Once upon a time there was a way, a way we used to  
know  
For stealing off at twilight from the weary ways of  
men.

## VIII.

Whisper it, O whisper it—the way, the way is all I need !

All the heart and will are here and all the deep desire !

*Once upon a time*—ah, now the light is drawing near  
indeed,

I see the fairy faces flush to roses round the fire.

## IX.

*Once upon a time*—the little lips are on my cheek again,

Little fairy fingers clasped and clinging draw me nigh,

Dreams, no more than dreams, but they unloose the weary  
prisoner's chain

And lead him from his dungeon ! “What's a thousand  
years?” they cry.

## X.

A thousand years, a thousand years, a little drifting  
dream ago,

All of us were hunting with a band of merry men,

The skies were blue, the boughs were green, the clouds  
were crisping isles of snow . . .

. . . So Robin blew his bugle, and the Now became  
the Then.

## THE TRAMP TRANSFIGURED.

(AN EPISODE IN THE LIFE OF A CORN-FLOWER  
MILLIONAIRE.)

## I.

ALL the way to Fairyland across the thyme and heather,  
Round a little bank of fern that rustled on the sky,  
Me and stick and bundle, sir, we jogged along to-  
gether,—

(Changeable the weather? Well—it aint all pie!)  
Just about the sunset—Won't you listen to my story?—

Look at me! I'm only rags and tatters to your eye!  
Sir, that blooming sunset crowned this battered hat with  
glory!

Me that was a crawling worm became a butterfly—  
(Aint it hot and dry?

Thank you, sir, thank you, sir!) a blooming butterfly.

## II.

Well, it happened this way! I was lying loose and lazy,  
Just as of a Sunday, you yourself might think no shame,  
Puffing little clouds of smoke, and picking at a daisy,

Dreaming of your dinner, p'raps, or wishful for the same:  
Suddenly, around that ferny bank there slowly waddled—

Slowly as the finger of a clock her shadow came—  
Slowly as a tortoise down that winding path she toddled,

Leaning on a crookéd staff, a poor old crookéd dame,  
Limping, but not lame,

*Tick, tack, tick, tack*, a poor old crookéd dame.

## III.

Slowly did I say, sir? Well, you've heard that funny fable  
Consekind the tortoise and the race it give an 'are?  
This was curiouser than that! At first I wasn't able  
Quite to size the memory up that bristled thro' my hair:  
Suddenly, I'd got it, with a nasty shivery feeling,  
While she walked and walked and yet was not a bit  
more near,—  
Sir, it was the tread-mill earth beneath her feet a-wheeling  
Faster than her feet could trot to heaven or anywhere,  
Earth's revolvin' stair  
Wheeling, while my wayside clump was kind of anchored  
there.

## IV.

*Tick, tack, tick, tack*, and just a little nearer,  
Inch and 'arf an inch she went, but never gained a yard:  
Quiet as a fox I lay; I didn't wish to scare 'er,  
Watching thro' the ferns, and thinking "What a rum  
old card!"  
Both her wrinkled tortoise eyes with yellow resin oozing,  
Both her poor old bony hands were red and seamed  
and scarred!  
Lord, I felt as if myself was in a public boozing,  
While my own old woman went about and scrubbed  
and charred!  
Lord, it seemed so hard!  
*Tick, tack, tick, tack*, she never gained a yard.

## V.

Yus, and there in front of her—I hadn't seen it rightly—  
Lurked that little finger-post to point another road,  
Just a tiny path of poppies twisting infi-nite-ly  
Through the whispering seas of wheat, a scarlet thread  
that showed



White with ox-eye daisies here and there and chalky  
 cobbles,  
 Blue with waving corn-flowers : far and far away it  
 glowed,  
 Winding into heaven, I thinks ; but, Lord, the way she  
 hobbles,  
 Lord, she'll never reach it, for she bears too great a load ;  
                   Yus, and then I knowed,  
 If she did, she couldn't, for the board was marked  
*No Road.*

## VI.

*Tick, tack, tick, tack*, I couldn't wait no longer !  
 Up I gets and bows polite and pleasant as a toff—  
 "Arternoon," I says, "I'm glad your boots are going  
 stronger ;  
 Only thing I'm dreading is your feet 'ull both come off."  
*Tick, tack, tick, tack*, she didn't stop to answer,  
 "Arternoon," she says, and sort o' chokes a little cough,  
 "I must get to Piddinghoe to-morrow if I can, sir !"  
 "Demme, my good woman ! Haw ! Don't think I  
 mean to loff,"  
                   Says I, like a toff,  
 "Where d'you mean to sleep to-night ? God made this  
 grass for go'ff."

## VII.

*Tick, tack, tick, tack*, and smilingly she eyed me  
 (Dreadful the low cunning of these creechars, don't you  
 think ?)  
 "That's all right ! The weather's bright. Them bushes  
 there 'ull hide me.  
 Don't the gorse smell nice ?" I felt my derned old  
 eyelids blink !  
 "Supper ? I've a crust of bread, a big one, and a bottle,"  
 (Just as I expected ! Ah, these creechars always drink !)

"Sugar and water and half a pinch of tea to rinse my  
throatle,

Then I'll curl up cosy!"—"If you're cotched it means  
the clink!"

—"Yus, but don't you think

If a star should see me, God 'ull tell that star to wink?"

#### VIII.

"Now, look here," I says, "I don't know what your  
blooming age is!"

"Three-score years and five," she says, "that's five  
more years to go

*Tick, tack, tick, tack*, before I gets my wages!"

"Wages all be damned," I says, "there's one thing  
that I know—

Gals that stay out late o' nights are sure to meet wi' sorrow.

Speaking as a toff," I says, "it isn't *comme il faut*!

Tell me why you want to get to Piddinghoe to-morrow."—

"That was where my son worked, twenty years ago!"—

"Twenty years ago?

Never wrote? May still be there? Remember you?

. . . Just so!"

#### IX.

Yus, it was a drama; but she weren't my long-lost  
parent!

*Tick, tack, tick, tack*, she trotted all the while,

Never getting forrarder, and not the least aware on't,

Though I stood beside her with a sort of silly smile

Stock-still! *Tick, tack!* This blooming world's a bubble:

There I stood and stared at it, mile on flowery mile,

Chasing o' the sunset.—"Gals are sure to meet wi' trouble

Staying out o' nights," I says, once more, and tries to  
smile,

"Come, that aint your style,

Here's a shilling, mother, for to-day I've made my pile!"

## X.

Yus, a dozen coppers, all my capital, it fled, sir,  
Representin' twelve bokays that cost me nothink each,  
Twelve bokays o' corn-flowers blue that grew beside my  
bed, sir,  
That same day, at sunrise, when the sky was like a  
peach :  
Easy as a poet's dreams they blossomed round my head,  
sir,  
All I had to do was just to lift my hand and reach :  
So, upon the roaring waves I cast my blooming bread,  
sir,  
Bread I'd earned with nose-gays on the bare-foot Brighton  
beach,  
Nose-gays *and* a speech,  
All about the bright blue eyes they matched on Brighton  
Beach.

## XL

Still, you've only got to hear the bankers on the budget,  
Then you'll know the giving game is hardly "high  
finance";  
Which no more it wasn't for that poor old dame to  
trudge it,  
*Tick, tack, tick, tack*, on such a devil's dance :  
Crumbs, it took me quite aback to see her stop so humble,  
Casting up into my face a sort of shiny glance,  
*Bless you, bless you*, that was what I thought I heard her  
mumble,  
Lord, a prayer for poor old Bill, a rummy sort of  
chance !  
Crumbs, that shiny glance  
Kinder made me king of all the sky from here to  
France.

## XII.

*Tick, tack, tick, tack*, but now she toddled faster :

Soon she'd reach the little twisted by-way through the wheat.

"Look 'ee here," I says, "young woman, don't you court disaster !

Peepin' through yon poppies there's a cottage trim and neat,

White as chalk and sweet as turf : wot price a bed for sorrow,

Sprigs of lavender between the pillow and the sheet ?"

"No," she says, "I've got to get to Piddinhoe to-morrow !

P'raps they'd tell the work'us ! And I've lashings here to eat :

Don't the gorse smell sweet ?" . . .

Well, I turned and left her plodding on beside the wheat.

## XIII.

Every cent I'd given her like a hero in a story ;

Yet, alone with leagues of wheat I seemed to grow aware

Solomon himself, arrayed in all his golden glory,

Couldn't vie with Me, the corn-flower king, the millionaire !

How to cash those bright blue cheques that night ? My trouser pockets

Jingled sudden ! Six more pennies, crept from James knew where !

Crumbs ! I hurried back with eyes just bulging from their sockets,

Pushed 'em in the old dame's fist and listened for the prayer,

Shamming not to care,

Bill—the blarsted chicken-thief, the corn-flower millionaire.

## XIV.

*Tick, tack, tick, tack*, and faster yet she clattered !

Ay, she'd almost gained a yard ! I left her once again.  
Feeling very warm inside and sort of 'ighly flattered,

On I plodded, all alone, with hay-stacks in my brain.  
Suddenly, with *chink—chink—chink*, the old sweet jingle  
Startled me ! 'Twas THRUPPENCE MORE ! three coppers  
round and plain !

Lord, temptation struck me and I felt my gullet tingle.

Then—I hurried back beside them seas of golden grain :

No, I can't explain ;

There I thrust 'em in her fist, and left her once again.

## XV.

Tinkle-chink ! THREE HA'PENCE ! If the vulgar fractions  
followed,

Big fleas have little fleas !. It flashed upon me there,—  
Like the snakes of Pharaoh which the snakes of Moses  
swallowed

All the world was playing at the tortoise and the hare :  
Half the smallest atom is—my soul was getting tipsy—

Heaven is one big circle and the centre's everywhere,  
Yus, and that old woman was an angel and a gipsy,

Yus, and Bill, the chicken - thief, the corn - flower  
millionaire,

Shamming not to care,

What was he ? A seraph on the misty rainbow-stair !

## XVI.

Don't you make no doubt of it ! The deeper that you  
look, sir,

All your ancient poets tell you just the same as me,—  
What about old Ovid and his most indecent book, sir,  
Morphosizing females into flower and star and tree ?

What about old Proteus and his 'ighly curious 'abits,  
 Mixing of his old grey beard into the old grey sea?  
 What about old Darwin and the hat that brought forth  
     rabbits,  
 Mud and slime that growed into the pomp of Ninevey?  
     What if there should be  
 One great Power beneath it all, one God in you and  
     me?

## XVII.

Anyway, it seemed to me I'd struck the world's pump-  
     handle!  
 "Back with that three ha'pence, Bill," I mutters, "or  
     you're lost."  
 Back I hurries thro' the dusk where, shining like a candle,  
 Pale before the sunset stood that fairy finger-post.  
*Sir, she wasn't there!* I'd struck the place where all  
     roads crost,  
 All the roads in all the world.

                                    She couldn't yet have trotted  
 Even to the . . . Hist! a stealthy step behind? A  
     ghost?  
*Swish!* A flying noose had caught me round the neck!  
     Garotted!  
 Back I staggered, clutching at the moonbeams, yus,  
     almost  
     Throttled! Sir, I boast  
 Bill is tough, but . . . when it comes to throttling by  
     a ghost!

•       •       •       •       •       •       •

## XVIII.

Winged like a butterfly, tall and slender  
 Out It steps with the rope on its arm.  
 "Crumbs," I says, "all right! I surrender!  
     When have I crossed you or done you harm?"

*Ef* you're a sperrit," I says, "O, crikey,  
*Ef* you're a sperrit, get hence, vamoose!"  
Sweet as music, she spoke—"I'm Psyche!"—  
Choking me still with her silken noose.

## XIX.

Straight at the word from the ferns and blossoms  
Fretting the moon-rise over the downs,  
Little blue wings and little white bosoms,  
Little white faces with golden crowns,  
Peeped, and the colours came twinkling round me,  
Laughed, and the turf grew purple with thyme,  
Danced, and the sweet crushed scents nigh drowned  
me,  
Sang, and the hare-bells rang in chime.

## XX.

All around me, gliding and gleaming,  
Fair as a fallen sunset-sky,  
Butterfly wings came drifting, dreaming,  
Clouds of the little folk clustered nigh,  
Little white hands like pearls uplifted  
Cords of silk in shimmering skeins,  
Cast them about me and dreamily drifted  
Winding me round with their soft warm chains.

## XXI

Round and round me they dizzily floated,  
Binding me faster with every turn:  
Crumbs, my pals would have grinned and gloated  
Watching me over that fringe of fern,  
Bill, with his battered old hat outstanding  
Black as a foam-swept rock to the moon,  
Bill, like a rainbow of silks expanding  
Into a beautiful big cocoon,—

## XXII.

Big as a cloud, though his hat stiel crowned him,  
 Yus, and his old boots bulged below :  
 Seas of colour went shimmering round him,  
 Dancing, glimmering, glancing, a-glow !  
 Bill knew well what them elves were at, sir,—  
 Aint you an en-to-mol-o-gist ?  
 Well, despite of his old black hat, sir,  
 Bill was *becoming*—a *chrysalist*.

•       •       •       •       •       •       •

## XXIII.

Muffled, smothered in a sea of emerald and opal,  
 Down a dazzling gulf of dreams I sank and sank away,  
 Wound about with twenty thousand yards of silken rope, all  
 Shimmering into crimson, glimmering into gray,  
 Drowsing, waking, living, dying, just as you regards it,  
 Buried in a sunset-cloud, or cloud of breaking day,  
 'Cording as from East or West yourself might look  
 to-wards it,  
 Losing, gaining, lost in darkness, raggéd, grimy, gay,  
 'And-cuffed, not to say  
 Gagged, but both my shoulders budding, sprouting white  
 as May.

## XXIV.

Sprouting like the milky buds o' hawthorn in the night-  
 time,  
 Pouting like the snowy buds o' roses in July,  
 Spreading in my chrysalist and waiting for the right time,  
 When—I thought—they'd bust to wings and Bill would  
 rise and fly,



*Tick, tack, tick, tack*, as if it came in answer,  
 Sweeping o'er my head again the tide o' dreams went  
 by,—  
*I must get to Piddinghoe to-morrow if I can, sir,*  
*Tick, tack*, a crackle in my chrysalist, a cry!  
 Then the warm blue sky  
 Bust the shell, and out crept Bill—a blooming butterfly

. . . . .

## XXV.

Blue as a corn-flower, blazed the zenith: the deepening  
 East like a scarlet poppy  
 Burned while, dazzled with golden bloom, white clouds  
 like daisies, green seas like wheat,  
 Gripping the sign-post, first, I climbs, to sun my wings,  
 which were wrinkled and floppy,  
 Spreading 'em white o'er the words *No Road*, and hang-  
 ing fast by my six black feet.

## XXVI.

Still on my head was the battered old beaver, but through  
 it my clubbed antennæ slanted,  
 ("Feelers" yourself would probably call 'em) my battered  
 old boots were hardly seen  
 Under the golden fluff of the tail! It was Bill, sir, Bill,  
 though highly enchanted,  
 Spreading his beautiful snow-white pinions, tipped with  
 orange, and veined with green.

## XXVII.

Yus, old Bill was an Orange-tip, a spirit in glory, a  
 blooming Psyche!  
 New, it was new from East to West this rummy old  
 world that I dreamed I knew,

How can I tell you the things that I saw with my—what  
 shall *I* call 'em?—"feelers?"—O, crikey,  
 "FEELERS?" You know how the man born blind  
 described such colours as scarlet or blue.

## XXVIII.

"Scarlet," he says, "is the sound of a trumpet, blue is a  
 flute," for he hasn't a notion!  
 No, nor nobody living on earth can tell it him plain, if  
 he hasn't the sight!  
 That's how it stands with ragged old Bill, a-drift and  
 a-dream on a measureless ocean,  
 Gifted wi' fifteen new-born senses, and seeing you blind  
 to their new strange light.

## XXIX.

How can I tell you? Sir, you must wait, till you die like  
 Bill, ere you understand it!  
 Only—I saw—the same as a bee that strikes to his hive  
 ten leagues away—  
 Straight as a die, while I winked and blinked on that sun-  
 warmed wood and my wings expanded  
 (Whistler drawings that men call wings)—I saw—and I  
 flew—that's all I can say.

## XXX.

Flew over leagues of whispering wonder, fairy forests and  
 flowery palaces,  
 Love-lorn casements, delicate kingdoms, beautiful flaming  
 thoughts of—Him;  
 Feasts of a million blue-mailed angels lifting their honey-  
 and-wine-brimmed chalices,  
 Throned upon clouds—(which you'd call white clover)  
 down to the world's most rosiest rim.

## XXXI.

New and new and new and new, the white o' the cliffs and  
the wind in the heather,  
Yus, and the sea-gulls flying like flakes of the sea that  
flashed to the new-born day,  
Song, song, song, song, quivering up in the wild blue  
weather,  
Thousands of seraphim singing together, and me just  
flying and—*knowing my way.*

## XXXII.

Straight as a die to Piddinghoe's dolphin, and there I  
drops in a cottage garden,  
There, on a sun-warmed window-sill, I winks and peeps,  
for the window was wide !  
Crumbs, he was there and fast in her arms and a-begging  
his poor old mother's pardon,  
There with his lips on her old gray hair, and her head on  
his breast while she laughed and cried,—

## XXXIII.

*“ One and nine-pence that old tramp gave me, or else I  
should never have reached you, sonny,  
Never, and you just leaving the village to-day and mean-  
ing to cross the sea,  
One and nine-pence he gave me, I paid for the farmer's lift  
with half o' the money !  
Here's the ten-pence halfpenny, sonny, 'twill pay for our  
little 'ouse-warming tea.”*

. . . . .

## XXXIV.

*Tick, tack, tick, tack*, out into the garden

Toddles that old Fairy with his arm about her—so,  
Cuddling of her still, and still a-begging of her pardon,

While she says "I wish the corn-flower king could only  
know!

Bless him, bless him, once again," she says and softly gazes

Up to heaven, a-smiling in her mutch as white as snow,  
All among her gilly-flowers and stocks and double daisies,

Mignonette, forget-me-not, . . . *Twenty years ago*,

All a rosy glow,

*This is how it was*, she said, *Twenty years ago*.

. . . . .

## XXXV.

Once again I seemed to wake, the vision it had fled, sir,

There I lay upon the downs: the sky was like a peach;  
Yus, with twelve bokays of corn-flowers blue beside my  
bed, sir,

More than usual 'andsome, so they'd bring me two-  
pence each.

Easy as a poet's dreams they blossomed round my head, sir,

All I had to do was just to lift my hand and reach,  
Tie 'em with a bit of string, and earn my blooming bread,  
sir,

Selling little nose-gays on the bare-foot Brighton beach,  
Nose-gays *and* a speech,

All about the bright blue eyes they matched on Brighton  
beach.

## XXXVI.

Overhead the singing lark and underfoot the heather,

Far and blue in front of us the unplumbed sky,

Me and stick and bundle, O, we jogs along together,

(Changeable the weather? Well, it aint all pie!)

Weather's like a woman, sir, and if she wants to quarrel,  
If her eyes begin to flash and hair begins to fly,  
You've to wait a little, then—the story has a moral—  
Aint the sunny kisses all the sweeter by and bye?—  
(Crumbs, it's 'ot and dry!  
Thank you, sir! Thank you, sir!) the sweeter by and  
bye.

## XXXVII.

So the world's my sweetheart and I sort of want to  
squeeze 'er.  
Toffs 'ull get no chance of heaven, take 'em in the lump!  
Never laid in hay-fields when the dawn came over-sea, sir?  
Guess it's true that story 'bout the needle and the hump!  
Never crept into a stack because the wind was blowing,  
Hollered out a nest and closed the door-way with a  
clump,  
Laid and heard the whisper of the silence, growing,  
growing,  
Watched a thousand wheeling stars and wondered if  
they'd bump?  
What I say would stump  
Joshua! But I've done it, sir. Don't think I'm off my  
chump.

## XXXVIII.

If you try and lay, sir, with your face turned up to wonder,  
Up to twenty million miles of stars that roll like one,  
Right across to God knows where, and you just huddled  
under  
Like a little beetle with no business of his own,  
There you'd hear—like growing grass—a funny silent  
sound, sir,  
Mixed with curious crackles in a steady undertone,  
Just the sound of twenty billion stars a-going round, sir,  
Yus, and you beneath 'em like a wise old ant, alone,  
Ant upon a stone,  
Waving of his antlers, on the Sussex downs, alone.

## ON THE DOWNS.

WIDE-EYED our childhood roamed the world  
 Knee-deep in blowing grass,  
 And watched the white clouds crisply curled  
 Above the mountain-pass,  
 And lay among the purple thyme  
 And from its fragrance caught  
 Strange hints from some elusive clime  
 Beyond the bounds of thought.

Glimpses of fair forgotten things  
 Beyond the gates of birth,  
 Half-caught from far off ancient springs  
 In heaven, and half of earth ;  
 And coloured like a fairy-tale  
 And whispering evermore  
 Half memories from the half-fenced pale  
 Of lives we lived before.

Here, weary of the roaring town  
 A-while may I return  
 And while the west wind roams the down  
 Lie still, lie still and learn :  
 Here are green leagues of murmuring wheat  
 With blue skies overhead,  
 And, all around, the winds are sweet  
 With May-bloom, white and red.

And, to and fro, the bee still hums  
His low unchanging song,  
And the same rustling whisper comes  
As through the ages long :  
Through all the thousands of the years  
That same sweet rumour flows,  
With dreaming skies and gleaming tears  
And kisses and the rose.

Once more the children throng the lanes,  
Themselves like flowers, to weave  
Their garlands and their daisy-chains  
And listen and believe  
The tale of *Once-upon-a-time*,  
And hear the *Long-ago*  
And *Happy-ever-after* chime  
Because it must be so.

And by those thousands of the years  
It is, though scarce we see,  
Dazed with the rainbows of our tears,  
Their steadfast unity,  
It is, or life's disjointed schemes,  
These stones, these ferns unfurled  
With such deep care—a madman's dreams  
Were wisdom to this world !

Dust into dust ! Lie still and learn,  
Hear how the ages sing  
The solemn joy of our return  
To that which makes the Spring :  
Even as we came, with childhood's trust,  
Wide-eyed we go, to Thee  
Who holdest in Thy sacred dust  
The heavenly Springs to be.

## A MAY-DAY CAROL.

WHAT is the loveliest light that Spring  
 Rosily parting her robe of gray  
 Girdled with leaflet green, can fling  
 Over the fields where her white feet stray?  
 What is the merriest promise of May  
 Flung o'er the dew-drenched April flowers?  
 Tell me, you on the pear-tree spray—  
*Carol of birds between the showers.*

What can life at its lightest bring  
 Better than this on its brightest day?  
 How should we fetter the white-throat's wing  
 Wild with joy of its woodland way?  
 Sweet, should love for an hour delay,  
 Swift, while the primrose-time is ours!  
 What is the lover's royallest lay?—  
*Carol of birds between the showers.*

What is the murmur of bees a-swing?  
 What is the laugh of a child at play?  
 What is the song that the angels sing?  
 (Where were the tune could the sweet notes stay  
 Longer than this, to kiss and betray?)  
 Nay, on the blue sky's topmost towers,  
 What is the song of the seraphim? Say—  
*Carol of birds between the showers.*

Thread the stars on a silver string,  
 (So did they sing in Bethlehem's bowers!)  
 Mirth for a little one, grief for a king,  
*Carol of birds between the showers.*



## THE CALL OF THE SPRING.

COME, choose your road and away, my lad,  
 Come, choose your road and away!  
 We'll out of the town by the road's bright crown  
 As it dips to the dazzling day.  
 It's a long white road for the weary;  
 But it rolls through the heart of the May.

Though many a road would merrily ring  
 To the tramp of your marching feet,  
 All roads are one from the day that's done,  
 And the miles are swift and sweet,  
 And the graves of your friends are the mile-stones  
 To the land where all roads meet.

But the call that you hear this day, my lad,  
 Is the Spring's old bugle of mirth  
 When the year's green fire in a soul's desire  
 Is brought like a rose to the birth;  
 And knights ride out to adventure  
 As the flowers break out of the earth.

Over the sweet-smelling mountain-passes  
 The clouds lie brightly curled;  
 The wild-flowers cling to the crags and swing  
 With cataract-dews impearled;  
 And the way, the way that you choose this day  
 Is the way to the end of the world.

It rolls from the golden long ago  
To the land that we ne'er shall find ;  
And it's uphill here, but it's downhill there,  
For the road is wise and kind,  
And all rough places and cheerless faces  
Will soon be left behind.

Come, choose your road and away, away,  
We'll follow the gypsy sun ;  
For it's soon, too soon to the end of the day,  
And the day is well begun ;  
And the road rolls on through the heart of the May,  
And there's never a May but one.

There's a fir-wood here, and a dog-rose there,  
And a note of the mating dove ;  
And a glimpse, maybe, of the warm blue sea,  
And the warm white clouds above ;  
And warm to your breast in a tenderer nest  
Your sweetheart's little glove.

There's not much better to win, my lad,  
There's not much better to win !  
You have lived, you have loved, you have fought, you  
have proved  
The worth of folly and sin ;  
So now come out of the City's rout,  
Come out of the dust and the din.

Come out,—a bundle and stick is all  
You'll need to carry along,  
If your heart can carry a kindly word,  
And your lips can carry a song ;  
You may leave the lave to the keep o' the grave,  
If your lips can carry a song !

*Come, choose your road and away, my lad,  
Come, choose your road and away!  
We'll out of the town by the road's bright crown,  
As it dips to the sapphire day!  
All roads may meet at the world's end,  
But, hey for the heart of the May!  
Come, choose your road and away, dear lad,  
Come choose your road and away.*

## A DEVONSHIRE DITTY.

## I.

IN a leafy lane of Devon  
 There's a cottage that I know,  
 Then a garden—then, a gray old crumbling wall,  
 And the wall's the wall of heaven  
 (Where I hardly care to go)  
 And there isn't any fiery sword at all.

## II.

But I never went to heaven.  
 There was right good reason why,  
 For they sent a shining angel to me there,  
 An angel, down in Devon,  
 (Clad in muslin by the bye)  
 With the halo of the sunshine on her hair.

## III.

Ah, whate'er the darkness covers,  
 And whate'er we sing or say,  
 Would you climb the wall of heaven an hour too soon  
 If you knew a place for lovers  
 Where the apple-blossoms stray  
 Out of heaven to sway and whisper to the moon?

## IV.

When we die—we'll think of Devon  
Where the garden's all aglow  
With the flowers that stray across the gray  
old wall :  
Then we'll climb it, out of heaven,  
From the other side you know,  
Straggle over it from heaven  
With the apple-blossom snow,  
Tumble back again to Devon  
Laugh and love as long ago,  
Where there isn't any fiery sword at all.

## BACCHUS AND THE PIRATES.

HALF a hundred terrible pig-tails, pirates famous in song  
 and story,  
 Hoisting the old black flag once more, in a palmy har-  
 bour of Caribbee,  
 "Farewell" we waved to our negro lasses, and chorussing  
 out to the billows of glory,  
 Billows a-glitter with rum and gold, we followed the  
 sunset over the sea.

*While earth goes round, let rum go round,  
 Our capstan song we sung :  
 Half a hundred broad-sheet pirates  
 When the world was young !*

Sea-roads plated with pieces of eight that rolled to a  
 heaven by rum made mellow,  
 Heaved and coloured our barque's black nose where the  
 Lascar sang to a twinkling star,  
 And the tangled bow-sprit plunged and dipped its point in  
 the West's wild red and yellow,  
 Till the curved white moon crept out astern like a naked  
 knife from a blue cymar.

*While earth goes round, let rum go round,  
 Our capstan song we sung :  
 Half a hundred terrible pirates  
 When the world was young !*

Half a hundred tarry pig-tails, Teach, the chewer of glass,  
had taught us,  
Taught us to balance the plank ye walk, your little  
plank-bridge to Kingdom Come:  
Half a score had sailed with Flint, and a dozen or so the  
devil had brought us  
Back from the pit where Blackbeard lay, in Beelzebub's  
bosom, a-screech for rum.

*While earth goes round, let rum go round,  
Our capstan song we sung:  
Half a hundred piping pirates  
When the world was young!*

There was Captain Hook (of whom ye have heard—so  
called from his terrible cold steel twister,  
His own right hand having gone to a shark with a taste  
for skippers on pirate-trips),  
There was Silver himself, with his cruel crutch, and the  
blind man Pew, with a phiz like a blister,  
Gouged and white and dreadfully dried in the reek of a  
thousand burning ships.

*While earth goes round, let rum go round,  
Our capstan song we sung:  
Half a hundred cut-throat pirates  
When the world was young!*

With our silver buckles and French cocked hats and our  
skirted coats (they were growing greener,  
But green and gold look well when spliced! We'd  
trimmed 'em up wi' some fine fresh lace)  
Bravely over the seas we danced to the horn-pipe tune of  
a concertina,  
Cutlasses jetting beneath our skirts and cambric hand-  
kerchiefs all in place.

*While earth goes round, let rum go round,  
Our capstan song we sung:  
Half a hundred elegant pirates  
When the world was young!*

And our black prow grated, one golden noon, on the  
happiest isle of the Happy Islands,  
An isle of Paradise, fair as a gem, on the sparkling  
breast of the wine-dark deep,  
An isle of blossom and yellow sand, and enchanted vines  
on the purple highlands,  
Wi' grapes like melons, nay clustering suns, a-sprawl  
over cliffs in their noonday sleep.

*While earth goes round, let rum go round,  
Our capstan song we sung :  
Half a hundred dream-struck pirates  
When the world was young !*

And lo ! on the soft warm edge of the sand, where the sea  
like wine in a golden noggin  
Creamed, and the rainbow-bubbles clung to his flame-red  
hair, a white youth lay,  
Sleeping ; and now, as his drowsy grip relaxed, the cup  
that he squeezed his grog in  
Slipped from his hand and its purple dregs were mixed  
with the flames and flakes of spray.

*He'd only a leopard-skin around  
His chest, whereas we sung :  
Half a hundred diffident pirates  
When the world was young !*

And we suddenly saw (had we seen them before? They  
were coloured like sand or the pelt on his shoulders)  
His head was pillowed on two great leopards, whose  
breathing rose and sank with his own ;  
Now a pirate is bold, but the vision was rum and would  
call for rum in the best of beholders,  
And it seemed we had seen Him before, in a dream, with  
that flame-red hair and that vine-leaf crown.

*And the earth went round, and the rum went round,  
And softlier now we sung :  
Half a hundred awe-struck pirates  
When the world was young !*



Now Timothy Hook (of whom ye have heard with his talon  
of steel) our doughty skipper,  
A man that, in youth being brought up pious, had many  
a book on his cabin-shelf,  
Suddenly caught at a comrade's hand with the tearing claws  
of his cold steel flipper  
And cried, "Great Thunder and Brimstone, boys, I've  
hit it at last! 'Tis *Bacchus himself*."

*And the earth went round, and the rum went round,  
And never a word we sung:  
Half a hundred tottering pirates  
When the world was young!*

He flung his French cocked hat i' the foam (though its lace  
was the best of his wearing apparel) :  
We stared at him—Bacchus! the sea reeled round like a  
wine-vat splashing with purple dreams,  
And the sunset-skies were dashed with blood of the grape  
as the sun like a new-staved barrel  
Flooded the tumbling West with wine and spattered the  
clouds with crimson gleams.

*And the earth went round, and our heads went round,  
And never a word we sung:  
Half a hundred staggering pirates  
When the world was young!*

Down to the ship for a fishing-net our crafty Hook sent  
Silver leaping ;  
Back he came on his pounding crutch, for all the world  
like a kangaroo ;  
And we caught the net and up to the Sleeper on hands  
and knees we all went creeping,  
Flung it across him and staked it down! 'Twas the best  
of our dreams and the dream was true.

*And the earth went round, and the rum went round,  
And loudly now we sung:  
Half a hundred jubilant pirates  
When the world was young!*

We had caught our god, and we got him aboard ere he  
 woke (he was more than a little heavy);  
 Glittering, beautiful, flushed he lay in the lurching bows  
 of the old black barque,  
 As the sunset died and the white moon dawned, and we  
 saw on the island a star-bright bevy  
 Of naked Bacchanals stealing to watch through the  
 whispering vines in the purple dark!

*While earth goes round, let rum go round,  
 Our capstan song we sung:  
 Half a hundred innocent pirates  
 When the world was young!*

Beautiful under the sailing moon, in the tangled net, with  
 the leopards beside him,  
 Snared like a wild young red-lipped merman, wilful,  
 petulant, flushed he lay;  
 While Silver and Hook in their big sea-boots and their  
 boat-cloaks guarded and gleefully eyed him,  
 Thinking what Bacchus might do for a seaman, like  
 standing him drinks, as a man might say.

*While earth goes round, let rum go round,  
 We sailed away and sung:  
 Half a hundred fanciful pirates  
 When the world was young!*

All the grog that ever was heard of, gods, was it stowed in  
 our sure possession?  
 O, the pictures that broached the skies and poured their  
 colours across our dreams!  
 O, the thoughts that tapped the sunset, and rolled like a  
 great torchlight procession  
 Down our throats in a glory of glories, a roaring splendour  
 of golden streams!

*And the earth went round, and the stars went round,  
 As we hauled the sheets and sung:  
 Half a hundred infinite pirates  
 When the world was young!*

Beautiful, white, at the break of day, He woke and, the net  
in a smoke dissolving,

He rose like a flame, with his yellow-eyed pards and his  
flame-red hair like a windy dawn,

And the crew kept back, respectful like, till the leopards  
advanced with their eyes revolving,

Then up the rigging went Silver and Hook, and the rest  
of us followed with case-knives drawn.

*While earth goes round, let rum go round,  
Our cross-tree song we sung:  
Half a hundred terrified pirates  
When the world was young!*

And "Take me home to my happy island!" he says.

"Not I," sings Hook, "by thunder;

We'll take you home to a happier isle, our palmy har-  
bour of Caribbee!"

"You won't!" says Bacchus, and quick as a dream the  
planks of the deck just heaved asunder,

And a mighty Vine came straggling up that grew from  
the depths of the wine-dark sea.

*And the sea went round, and the skies went round,  
As our cross-tree song we sung:  
Half a hundred horrified pirates  
When the world was young!*

We were anchored fast as an oak on land, and the branches  
clutched and the tendrils quickened,

And bound us writhing like snakes to the spars! Ay,  
we hacked with our knives at the boughs in vain,

And Bacchus laughed loud on the decks below, as ever the  
tough sprays tightened and thickened,

And the blazing hours went by, and we gaped with thirst  
and our ribs were racked with pain.

*And the skies went round, and the sea swam round,  
And we knew not what we sung:  
Half a hundred lunatic pirates  
When the world was young!*

Bunch upon bunch of sunlike grapes, as we writhed and  
struggled and raved and strangled,

Bunch upon bunch of gold and purple daubed its bloom  
on our baked black lips.

Clustering grapes, O, bigger than pumpkins, just out of  
reach they bobbed and dangled

Over the vine-entangled sails of that most dumbfounded  
of pirate ships!

*And the sun went round, and the moon came round,  
And mocked us where we hung:  
Half a hundred maniac pirates  
When the world was young!*

Over the waters the white moon winked its bruised old eye  
at our bowery prison,

When suddenly we were aware of a light such as never  
a moon or a ship's lamp throws,

And a shallop of pearl, like a Nautilus shell, came shimmering  
up as by magic arisen,

With sails of silk and a glory around it that turned the  
sea to a rippling rose.

*And our heads went round, and the stars went round,  
At the song that cruiser sung:  
Half a hundred goggle-eyed pirates  
When the world was young!*

Half a hundred rose-white Bacchanals hauled the ropes of  
that rosy cruiser!

Over the seas they came and laid their little white hands  
on the old black barque;

And Bacchus he ups and he steps aboard: "Hi, stop!"  
cries Hook, "you frantic old boozer!

Belay, below there, don't you go and leave poor pirates  
to die in the dark!"

*And the moon went round, and the stars went round,  
As they all pushed off and sung:  
Half a hundred ribbonless Bacchanals  
When the world was young!*

Over the seas they went and Bacchus he stands, with his  
yellow-eyed leopards beside him,

High on the poop of rose and pearl, and kisses his hand  
to us, pleasant as pie!

While the Bacchanals danced to their tambourines, and the  
vine-leaves flew, and Hook just eyed him

Once, as a man that was brought up pious, and scorn-  
fully hollers, "*Well, you aint shy!*"

*For all around him, vine-leaf crowned,*

*The wild white Bacchanals flung!*

*Nor it wasn't a sight for respectable pirates*

*When the world was young!*

All around that rainbow-Nautilus rippled the bloom of a  
thousand roses,

Nay, but the sparkle of fairy sea-nymphs breasting a fairy-  
like sea of wine,

Swimming around it in murmuring thousands, with white  
arms tossing; till—all that *we* knows is

The light went out, and the night was dark, and the  
grapes had burst and their juice was—brine!

*And the vines that bound our bodies round*

*Were plain wet ropes that hung:*

*Squeezing the light out o' fifty pirates*

*When the world was young!*

. . . . .

Over the seas in the pomp of dawn a king's ship came with  
her proud flag flying;

Cloud upon cloud we watched her tower with her belts  
and her crowded zones of sail;

And an A.B. perched in a white crow's nest, with a brass-  
rimmed spy-glass quietly spying,

As we swallowed the lumps in our choking throats and  
uttered our last faint feeble hail!

*And our heads went round as the ship went round,*

*And we thought how coves had swung:*

*All for playing at broad-sheet pirates*

*When the world was young!*

Half a hundred trembling corsairs, all cut loose, but a trifle giddy,

We lands on their trim white decks at last and the bo'sun he whistles us good hot grog,  
And we tries to confess, but there wasn't a soul from the Admiral's self to the gold-laced middy  
But says, "They're delirious still, poor chaps," and the Cap'n he enters the fact in his log,

*That his boat's crew found us nearly drowned  
In a barrel without a bung—  
Half a hundred suffering sea-cooks  
When the world was young!*

So we sailed by Execution Dock, where the swinging pirates, haughty and scornful

Rattled their chains, and on Margate beach we came like a school-treat safe to land;  
And one of us took to religion at once; and the rest of the crew, tho' their hearts were mournful,  
Capered about as Christy Minstrels, while Hook conducted the big brass band.

*And the sun went round, and the moon went round,  
And, O, 'twas a thought that stung!  
There was none to believe we were broad-sheet pirates  
When the world was young!*

Ah, yet (if ye stand me a noggin of rum) shall the old Blue Dolphin echo the story!

We'll hoist the white cross-bones again in our palmy harbour of Caribbee!  
We'll wave farewell to our negro lasses and, chorussing out to the billows of glory,  
Billows-a-glitter with rum and gold, we'll follow the sunset over the sea!

*While earth goes round, let rum go round!  
O, sing it as we sung!  
Half a hundred terrible pirates  
When the world was young!*

## THE NEWSPAPER BOY.

## I.

ELF of the City, a lean little hollow-eyed boy  
 Ragged and tattered, but lithe as a slip of the Spring,  
 Under the lamp-light he runs with a reckless joy  
 Shouting a murderer's doom or the death of a King.  
 Out of the darkness he leaps like a wild strange hint,  
 Herald of tragedy, comedy, crime and despair,  
 Waving a poster that hurls you, in fierce black print  
 One word *Mystery*, under the lamp's white glare.

## II.

Elf of the night of the City he darts with his crew  
 Out of a vaporous furnace of colour that wreathes  
 Magical letters a-flicker from crimson to blue  
 High overhead. All round him the mad world seethes  
 Hansoms, like cantering beetles, with diamond eyes  
 Run through the moons of it ; busses in yellow and red  
 Hoot ; and St Paul's is a bubble afloat in the skies,  
 Watching the pale moths flit and the dark death's head.

## III.

Painted and powdered they shimmer and rustle and stream  
 Westward, the night moths, masks of the Magdalen !  
 See,  
 Puck of the revels, he leaps through the sinister dream  
 Waving his elfin evangel of *Mystery*,

Puck of the bubble or dome of their scoffing or trust,  
Puck of the fairy-like tower with the clock in its face,  
Puck of an Empire that whirls on a pellet of dust  
Bearing his elfin device thro' the splendours of space.

## IV.

*Mystery*—is it the scribble of doom on the dark,  
Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin, again?  
*Mystery*,—is it a scrap of remembrance, a spark  
Burning still in the fog of a blind world's brain?  
Elf of the gossamer tangles of shadow and light,  
Wild electrical webs and the battle that rolls  
League upon perishing league thro' the ravenous night,  
Breaker on perishing breaker of human souls.

## V.

Soaked in the colours, a flake of the flying spray  
Flung over wreckage and yeast of the murderous town,  
Onward he flaunts it, innocent, vicious and gay,  
Prophet of prayers that are stifled and loves that drown,  
Urchin and sprat of the City that roars like a sea  
Surging around him in hunger and splendour and shame,  
Cruelty, luxury, madness, he leaps in his glee  
Out of the mazes of mist and the vistas of flame.

## VI.

Ragged and tattered he scurries away in the gloom :  
Over the thundering traffic a moment his cry  
*Mystery! Mystery!*—reckless of death and doom  
Rings; and the great wheels roll and the world goes by  
Lost, is it lost, that hollow-eyed flash of the light?—  
Poor little face flying by with the word that saves,  
Pale little mouth of the mask of the measureless night,  
Shrilling the heart of it, lost like the foam on its waves!



## THE TWO WORLDS.

THIS outer world is but the pictured scroll  
     Of worlds within the soul,  
 A coloured chart, a blazoned missal-book  
     Whereon who rightly look  
 May spell the splendours with their mortal eyes  
     And steer to Paradise.

O, well for him that knows and early knows  
     In his own soul the rose  
 Secretly burgeons, of this earthly flower  
     The heavenly paramour :  
 And all these fairy dreams of green-wood fern,  
     These waves that break and yearn,  
 Shadows and hieroglyphs, hills, clouds and seas,  
     Faces and flowers and trees,  
 Terrestrial picture-parables, relate  
     Each to its heavenly mate.

O, well for him that finds in sky and sea  
     This two-fold mystery,  
 And loses not (as painfully he spells  
     The fine-spun syllables)  
 The cadences, the burning inner gleam,  
     The poet's heavenly dream.

Well for the poet if this earthly chart  
     Be printed in his heart,  
 When to his world of spirit woods and seas  
     With eager face he flees

And treads the untrodden fields of unknown flowers  
    And threads the angelic bowers,  
And hears that unheard nightingale whose moan  
    Trembles within his own,  
And lovers murmuring in the leafy lanes  
    Of his own joys and pains.

For though he voyages further than the flight  
    Of earthly day and night,  
Traversing to the sky's remotest ends  
    A world that he transcends,  
Safe, he shall hear the hidden breakers roar  
    Against the mystic shore ;  
Shall roam the yellow sands where sirens bare  
    Their breasts and wind their hair ;  
Shall with their perfumed tresses blind his eyes,  
    And still possess the skies.

He, where the deep unearthly jungles are,  
    Beneath his Eastern star  
Shall pass the tawny lion in his den  
    And cross the quaking fen.  
He learnt his path (and treads it undefiled)  
    When, as a little child,  
He bent his head with long and loving looks  
    O'er earthly picture-books.  
His earthly love nestles against his side,  
    His young celestial guide.

## GORSE.

BETWEEN my face and the warm blue sky  
 The crisp white clouds go sailing by,  
     And the only sound is the sound of your breathing,  
 The song of a bird and the sea's long sigh.

Here, on the downs, as a tale re-told  
 The sprays of the gorse are a-blaze with gold,  
     As of old, on the sea-washed hills of my boyhood,  
 Breathing the same sweet scent as of old.

Under a raggéd golden spray  
 The great sea sparkles far away,  
     Beautiful, bright, as my heart remembers  
 Many a dazzle of waves in May.

Long ago as I watched them shine  
 Under the boughs of fir and pine,  
     Here I watch them to-day and wonder,  
 Here, with my love's hand warm in mine.

The soft wings pass that we used to chase,  
 Dreams that I dreamed had left not a trace,  
     The same, the same, with the bars of crimson,  
 The green-veined white, with its floating grace,

The same to the least bright fleck on their wings !  
And I close my eyes, and a lost bird sings,

And a far sea sighs, and the old sweet fragrance  
Wraps me round with the dear dead springs,

Wraps me round with the springs to be  
When lovers that think not of you or me

Laugh, but our eyes will be closed in darkness,  
Closed to the sky and the gorse and the sea,

And the same great glory of ragged gold  
Once more, once more, as a tale re-told

Shall whisper their hearts with the same sweet fragrance  
And their warm hands cling, as of old, as of old.

Dead and un-born, the same blue skies  
Cover us ! Love, as I read your eyes,

Do I not know whose love enfolds us,  
As we fold the past in our memories,

Past, present, future, the old and the new ?  
From the depths of the grave a cry breaks through

And trembles, a sky-lark blind in the azure,  
The depths of the all-enfolding blue.

O, resurrection of folded years  
Deep in our hearts, with your smiles and tears,

Dead and un-born shall not He remember  
Who folds our cry in His heart, and hears.

FOR THE EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY OF  
GEORGE MEREDITH.

A HEALTH, a ringing health, unto the king  
Of all our hearts to-day ! But what proud song  
Should follow on the thought, nor do him wrong ?  
Except the sea were harp, each mirthful string  
The lovely lightning of the nights of Spring,  
And Dawn the lonely listener, glad and grave  
With colours of the sea-shell and the wave  
In brightening eye and cheek, there is none to sing !

Drink to him, as men upon an Alpine peak  
Brim one immortal cup of crimson wine,  
And into it drop one pure cold crust of snow,  
Then hold it up, too rapturously to speak  
And drink—to the mountains, line on glittering line,  
Surging away into the sunset-glow.

## IN MEMORY OF SWINBURNE.

## I.

APRIL from shore to shore, from sea to sea,  
 April in heaven and on the springing spray  
 Buoyant with birds that sing to welcome May  
 And April in those eyes that mourn for thee :  
 "This is my singing month ; my hawthorn tree  
 Burgeons once more," we seemed to hear thee say,  
 "This is my singing month : my fingers stray  
 Over the lute. What shall the music be ?"

And April answered with too great a song  
 For mortal lips to sing or hearts to hear,  
 Heard only of that high invisible throng  
 For whom thy song makes April all the year !  
 "My singing month, what bringest thou ?" Her breath  
 Swooned with all music, and she answered—" Death."

## II.

Ah, but on earth,—“ can’st thou, too, die,”  
 Low she whispers, “lover of mine ?”  
 April, queen over earth and sky  
 Whispers, her trembling lashes shine :  
 ‘Wings of the sea, good-bye, good-bye,  
 Down to the dim sea-line.”

Home to the heart of thine old-world lover,  
 Home to thy "fair green-girdled" sea!  
 There shall thy soul with the sea-birds hover,  
 Free of the deep as their wings are free;  
 Free, for the grave-flowers only cover  
 This, the dark cage of thee.

Thee, the storm-bird, nightingale-souled,  
 Brother of Sappho, the seas reclaim!  
 Age upon age have the great waves rolled  
 Mad with her music, exultant, aflame;  
 Thee, thee too, shall their glory enfold,  
 Lit with thy snow-winged fame.

Back, thro' the years, fleets the sea-bird's wing  
*Sappho, of old time, once,—ah, hark!*  
 So did he love her of old and sing!  
 Listen, he flies to her, back thro' the dark!  
*Sappho, of old time, once. . . . Yea, Spring*  
 Calls him home to her, hark!

*Sappho, long since, in the years far sped,*  
*Sappho, I loved thee!* Did I not seem  
 Fosterling only of earth? I have fled,  
 Fled to thee, sister. Time is a dream!  
 Shelley is here with us! Death lies dead!  
 Ah, how the bright waves gleam.

Wide was the cage-door, idly swinging;  
 April touched me and whispered "come."  
 Out and away to the great deep winging,  
 Sister, I flashed to thee over the foam,  
 Out to the sea of Eternity, singing  
 "Mother, thy child comes home."

. . . . .

Ah, but how shall we welcome May  
Here where the wing of song droops low,  
Here by the last green swinging spray  
Brushed by the sea-bird's wings of snow,  
We that gazed on his glorious way  
Out where the great winds blow?

*Here upon earth—"can'st thou, too, die,  
Lover of life and lover of mine?"  
April, conquering earth and sky  
Whispers, her trembling lashes shine:  
"Wings of the sea, good-bye, good-bye,  
Down to the dim sea-line."*



ON THE DEATH OF FRANCIS  
THOMPSON.

## I.

How grandly glow the bays  
Purpureally enwound  
With those rich thorns, the brows  
How infinitely crowned  
That now thro' Death's dark house  
Have passed with royal gaze :  
Purpureally enwound  
How grandly glow the bays.

## II.

Sweet, sweet and three-fold sweet,  
Pulsing with three-fold pain,  
Where the lark fails of flight  
Soared the celestial strain ;  
Beyond the sapphire height  
Flew the gold-wingéd feet,  
Beautiful, pierced with pain,  
Sweet, sweet and three-fold sweet ;

## III.

And where *Is not* and *Is*  
Are wed in one sweet Name,  
And the world's rootless vine  
With dew of stars a-flame

Laughs, from those deep divine  
 Impossibilities,  
 Our reason all to shame—  
*This cannot be, but is;*

## IV.

Into the Vast, the Deep  
 Beyond all mortal sight,  
 The Nothingness that conceived  
 The worlds of day and night,  
 The Nothingness that heaved  
 Pure sides in virgin sleep,  
 Brought out of Darkness, light;  
 And man from out the Deep.

## V.

Into that Mystery  
 Let not thine hand be thrust:  
 Nothingness is a world  
 Thy science well may trust . . .  
 But lo, a leaf unfurled,  
 Nay, a cry mocking thee  
 From the first grain of dust—  
*I am, yet cannot be!*

## VI.

Adventuring un-afraid  
 Into that last deep shrine,  
 Must not the child-heart see  
 Its deepest symbol shine,  
 The world's Birth-mystery,  
 Whereto the suns are shade?  
 Lo, the white breast divine—  
 The Holy Mother-maid!

## VII.

How miss that Sacrifice,  
 That cross of Yea and Nay,  
 That paradox of heaven  
 Whose palms point either way,  
 Through each a nail being driven  
 That the arms out-span the skies  
 And our earth-dust this day  
 Out-sweeten Paradise.

## VIII.

We part the seamless robe,  
 Our wisdom would divid  
 The raiment of the King,  
 Our spear is in His side,  
 Even while the angels sing  
 Around our perishing globe,  
 And Death re-knits in pride  
 The seamless purple robe.

•        •        •        •        •

## IX.

*How grandly glow the bays  
 Purpureally enwound  
 With those rich thorns, the brows  
 How infinitely crowned  
 That now thro' Death's dark house  
 Have passed with royal gaze :  
 Purpureally enwound  
 How grandly glow the bays.*

## IN MEMORY OF MEREDITH.

## I.

HIGH on the mountains, who stands proudly, clad with the  
     light of May,  
 Rich as the dawn, deep-hearted as night, diamond-bright  
     as day,  
 Who, while the slopes of the beautiful valley throb with our  
     muffled tread  
 Who, with the hill-flowers wound in her tresses, welcomes  
     our deathless dead?

## II.

Is it not she whom he sought so long thro' the high lawns  
     dewy and sweet,  
 Up thro' the crags and the glittering snows faint-flushed  
     with her rosy feet,  
 Is it not she—the queen of our night—crowned by the  
     unseen sun,  
 Artemis, she that can see the light, when light upon earth  
     is none?

## III.

Huntress, queen of the dark of the world (no darker at  
     night than noon)  
 Beauty immortal and undefiled, the Eternal sun's white  
     moon,

Only by thee and thy silver shafts for a flash can our  
    hearts discern,  
Pierced to the quick, the love, the love that still thro' the  
    dark doth yearn.

## IV.

What to his soul were the hill-flowers, what the gold at the  
    break of day  
Shot thro' the red-stemmed firs to the lake where the  
    swimmer clove his way,  
What were the quivering harmonies showered from the  
    heaven-tossed heart of the lark,  
Artemis, Huntress, what were these but thy keen shafts  
    cleaving the dark?

## V.

Frost of the hedge-rows, flash of the jasmine, sparkle of  
    dew on the leaf,  
Seas lit wide by the summer lightning, shafts from thy  
    diamond sheaf,  
Deeply they pierced him, deeply he loved thee, now has  
    he found thy soul,  
Artemis, thine, in this bridal peal, where we hear but the  
    death-bell toll.

## A FRIEND OF CARLYLE.

## I.

MASTER of arts, for all those years  
 Among these lonely Devon moors,  
 (Lonely to you, but smiles and tears  
 Have crowded thro' my school-house doors)  
 These garden walls would hardly suit  
 A man on great ambitions bent,  
 And yet my trees have borne some fruit  
 Of grateful, ay and proud content.

## II.

Drinking the sunlight as he spoke,  
 Hale in September as in May,  
 Across his clear frank face there broke  
 A smile that seemed to praise and pray,  
 Half rapture, half adoring love,  
 And steadfast as the soul of truth  
 Which, though the thick gray gleamed above,  
 Brightened his eyes with deeper youth.

## III.

For think, he said, each year a score  
 Of lives commended to my trust,  
 ('Tis never less and sometimes more)  
 It leaves the mind no time to rust :

They come—just when for good or ill  
My teaching kindles or controls.  
From first to last my striving will  
Has helped to train ten hundred souls.

## IV.

Forgive me, Thou who knowest all  
The barren and the unhelpful days ;  
For still to Thee my heart would call  
Before I went my morning ways,  
Or turned my pencilled old Carlyle,  
My guide thro' doubts of long ago,  
And thought, to-day some word or smile  
May teach them more than aught I know.

## V.

For I did doubt : though all my youth  
To one great ministry aspired,  
I saw the fiery sword of truth  
Guarding the portal I desired.  
The God whom Science could destroy  
I slowly followed to his tomb,  
Then turned, alone, a friendless boy  
To wrestle with the o'erwhelming gloom.

## VI.

For truth, for truth I strove, and yet  
Could I forget the tender pride  
Which those who loved me had so set  
On this my work, or cast aside  
The years of labour (spent to learn  
That all the learning was a dream)  
Thus on the very verge to turn  
And meet—Love's eyes with tears a-gleam ?

## VII.

And sacrifices had been made  
To give me . . . Well, the tale is old :  
But even your modern men are swayed  
By fears on one great subject—"gold" ;  
And so, you'll understand, it meant  
My "whole career," and check your smile;  
When, having lost my God, I went  
To my great hero-soul—Carlyle.

## VIII.

They chatter of him? Let that be !  
I'd only seen him once : he stood  
Crowned by his university,  
Wearing the gorgeous robes and hood.  
Beneath him surged a cheering crowd  
Of young men straining tow'rds his face.  
A little flushed, a little proud,  
He took his throne in that high place.

## IX.

O, what a drama undiscerned  
Swelled to its climax in that hour,  
Where he the poor Scotch peasant burned  
Before us with a seraph's power,  
A nation's laurels on his brow  
While, far away, Death's levelled dart  
Unseen, unfeared, undreamed, e'en now  
Struck at his heart's beloved heart.

## X.

We clamoured for our king to speak !  
He rose. A breathless silence fell  
The flush of fame was on his cheek.  
He bore that regal splendour well,



Then—suddenly—cast the robes aside !  
Our hearts burned and our eyes grew wet :  
He spoke as at his own hearth-side,  
But O, we knew him kinglier yet.

## XI.

Still through and through me thrills the fire,  
Unquenched by all the following years,  
Which bade us trust the truth, aspire,  
And blinded us with god-like tears !  
That face had suffered in the same  
Dark night, through which I still must grope ;  
But, lit with some transfiguring flame,  
He closed—*We bid you be of hope.*

## XII.

And so I went to him. He heard,  
O, kindly as a father might ;  
And, here and there, some burning word  
Flashed sudden lightnings thro' my night :  
And, as he spoke, I felt and saw  
The night was only where I lay  
In one dark gulf, and truth's own law  
Would lead me tow'ards the perfect day.

## XIII.

"As from the blind seed springs the flower,  
As from the acorn soars the oak,  
From darkness into heaven may tower  
The soul of man," he gently spoke,  
"From Time into the Eternal Love !  
Rally the might within thee, trust  
In truth, and those broad heavens above,  
They will not doom thee to the dust."

. . . . .

## XIV.

Troubles enough there were indeed  
Before I caught the first great gleam.  
It came when I was most in need  
And, like one waking from a dream,  
To a new heaven and a new earth  
I saw and, kneeling, wept for joy—  
Death bringing heavenly life to birth  
In bliss which nothing can destroy.

## XV.

It was the night my loved one died,  
The year our child, who lives, was born !  
All night upon my knees I cried  
To God to change His world ere morn,  
"Roll back Thy stars, bring back my dead,  
And take what else Thou wilt away ;  
But bring not back to me," I said,  
"The hopeless horror of the day."

## XVI.

I could not live, I could not die,  
My fate was not in my control :  
I only knew that this wild cry  
Would, with the dawn, destroy my soul,  
If, with that dawn, our rutted road,  
The same dark trees, the same dark farms  
Should mock me ! "God, too great Thy load !"  
Then—round me swept the Eternal arms.

## XVII.

That once, if never in my life  
Again, I felt them, as the dawn  
Came, with a deeper wonder rife  
Than aught in that old world withdrawn :

I felt His love around me furled,  
His pity, gentle as the dew,  
And plucked the blind aside. *The world*  
*Was changed. His earth was made anew.*

## XVIII.

*A pure white mantle blotted out*  
*The world I used to know :*  
*There was no scarlet in the sky*  
*Or on the hills below,*  
*Gently as mercy out of heaven*  
*Came down the healing snow.*

## XIX.

*The trees that were so dark and bare*  
*Stood up in radiant white,*  
*And the road forgot its furrowed care*  
*As day forgets the night,*  
*And the new heavens and the new earth*  
*Lay robed in dazzling light.*

## XX.

*And every flake that fell from heaven*  
*Was like an angel's kiss,*  
*Or a feather fluttering from the wings*  
*Of some dear soul in bliss*  
*Who gently leaned from that bright world*  
*To soothe the pain of this.*

## XXI.

*Oft had I felt for some brief flash*  
*The heavenly secret glow*  
*In sunsets, traced some hieroglyph*  
*In Nature—flowers that blow*  
*And perish ; tender, climbing boughs ;*  
*The stars—and then—'twould go.*

## XXII.

*But here I felt within my soul,  
Clear as on field and tree,  
The falling of the heavenly snow,  
A twofold mystery,  
And one was meant to bless the world,  
And one was meant for me.*

## XXIII.

And at the grave-side of my love  
Once more thro' Nature did I see  
Unspeakable, O heaven above,  
What shining from Eternity!  
They lowered the coffin to its place,  
And o'er the grave the great sun smiled  
Full in—that lifted, laughing face,  
There, in the nurse's arms, the child.

## XXIV.

O, what are words or waves of the sea  
Save for the Power that through them shines,  
The Soul that gives them unity  
And sends its glory through the lines?  
Will art—nay, science—deem it vain,  
That world-wide flash whereby I knew  
His gentle touch in sun and rain,  
His mercy gliding in the dew?

## XXV.

Since then, the Power behind the world  
Has never left me, and I find  
In every April fern unfurled  
Some vision of the Eternal mind:

The clouds affirm their Charioteer,  
The hills demand His higher throne,  
And year cries out to fleeting year  
The Everlasting claims His own.

## XXVI.

The God I worshipped when a boy  
I lost ; and now that fifty years  
Have passed with all they could destroy  
Of all my hopes and dreams and fears,  
Full fifty years, in this dear place  
Where all those generations trod,  
Why (and heaven lit his lifted face)  
Now, there seems nothing else but God.

## THE TESTIMONY OF ART.

As earth, sad earth, thrusts many a gloomy cape  
 Into the sea's bright colour and living glee,  
 So do we strive to embay that mystery  
 Which earthly hands must ever let escape ;  
 The Word we seek for is the golden shape  
 That shall enshrine the Soul we cannot see,  
 A temporal chalice of Eternity  
 Purple with beating blood of the hallowed grape.

Once was it wine and sacramental bread  
 Whereby we knew the power that through Him smiled  
 When, in one still small utterance, He hurled  
 The Eternities beneath His feet and said  
 With lips, O meek as any little child,  
*Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*

## THE SCHOLARS.

WHERE is the scholar whose clear mind can hold  
 The floral text of one sweet April mead?—

The flowing lines, which few can spell indeed  
 Though most will note the scarlet and the gold  
 Around the flourishing capitals grandly scrolled ;

But ah, the subtle cadences that need  
 The lover's heart, the lover's heart to read,  
 And ah, the songs unsung, the tales un-told.

Poor fools-capped scholars—grammar keeps us close,

The primers thrall us, and our eyes grow dim :

When will old Master Science hear the call,  
 Bid us run free with life in every limb

To breathe the poems and hear the last red rose  
 Gossiping over God's gray garden-wall?

## RESURRECTION.

ONCE more I hear the everlasting sea  
 Breathing beneath the mountain's fragrant breast,  
*Come unto Me, come unto Me,*  
*And I will give you rest.*

We have destroyed the Temple and in three days  
 He hath rebuilt it—all things are made new :  
 And hark what wild throats pour His praise  
 Beneath the boundless blue.

We plucked down all His altars, cried aloud  
 And gashed ourselves for little gods of clay !  
 Yon floating cloud was but a cloud,  
 The May no more than May.

We plucked down all His altars, left not one  
 Save where, perchance (and ah, the joy was fleet),  
 We laid our garlands in the sun  
 At the white Sea-born's feet.

We plucked down all His altars, not to make  
 The small praise greater, but the great praise less,  
 We sealed all fountains where the soul could slake  
 Its thirst and weariness.



"Love" was too small, too human to be found  
In that transcendent source whence love was born :  
We talked of "forces" : heaven was crowned  
With philosophic thorn.

"Your God is in your image," we cried, but O,  
'Twas only man's own deepest heart ye gave,  
Knowing that He transcended all ye know,  
While we—we dug His grave.

Denied Him even the crown on our own brow,  
E'en these poor symbols of His loftier reign,  
Levelled His Temple with the dust, and now  
He is risen, He is risen again,

Risen, like this resurrection of the year,  
This grand ascension of the choral spring,  
Which those harp-crowded heavens bend to hear  
And meet upon the wing.

"He is dead," we cried, and even amid that gloom  
The wintry veil was rent ! The new-born day  
Showed us the Angel seated in the tomb  
And the stone rolled away.

It is the hour ! We challenge heaven above  
Now, to deny our slight ephemeral breath  
Joy, anguish, and that everlasting love  
Which triumphs over death.

## A JAPANESE LOVE-SONG

## I.

THE young moon is white,  
 But the willows are blue :  
 Your small lips are red,  
 But the great clouds are gray :  
 The waves are so many  
 That whisper to you ;  
 But my love is only  
 One flight of spray.

## II.

The bright drops are many,  
 The dark wave is one :  
 The dark wave subsides,  
 And the bright sea remains !  
 And wherever, O singing  
 Maid, you may run,  
 You are one with the world  
 For all your pains.

## III.

Though the great skies are dark,  
 And your small feet are white,  
 Though your wide eyes are blue  
 And the closed poppies red,

Tho' the kisses are many  
That colour the night,  
They are linked like pearls  
On one golden thread.

## IV.

Were the gray clouds not made  
For the red of your mouth ;  
The ages for flight  
Of the butterfly years ;  
The sweet of the peach  
For the pale lips of drouth,  
The sunlight of smiles  
For the shadow of tears ?

## V.

Love, Love is the thread  
That has pierced them with bliss !  
All their hues are but notes  
In one world-wide tune :  
Lips, willows, and waves,  
We are one as we kiss,  
And your face and the flower  
Faint away in the moon.

## THE TWO PAINTERS.

(A TALE OF OLD JAPAN.)

## I.

YOICHI TENKO, the painter,  
 Dwelt by the purple sea,  
 Painting the peacock islands  
 Under his willow-tree :  
 Also in temples he painted  
 Dragons of old Japan,  
 With a child to look at the pictures—  
 Little O Kimi San.

Kimi, the child of his brother,  
 Bright as the moon in May,  
 White as a lotus lily,  
 Pink as a plum-tree spray,  
 Linking her soft arm round him  
 Sang to his heart for an hour,  
 Kissed him with ripples of laughter  
 And lips of the cherry flower.

Child of the old pearl-fisher  
 Lost in his junk at sea,  
 Kimi was loved of Tenko  
 As his own child might be,  
 Yoichi Tenko the painter,  
 Wrinkled and grey and old,  
 Teacher of many disciples  
 That paid for his dreams with gold.

## II.

Peonies, peonies crowned the May!  
Clad in blue and white array  
Came Sawara to the school  
Under the silvery willow-tree,  
All to learn of Tenko!  
Riding on a milk-white mule,  
Young and poor and proud was he,  
Lissom as a cherry spray  
(Peonies, peonies, crowned the day!)  
And he rode the golden way  
To the school of Tenko.

Swift to learn, beneath his hand  
Soon he watched his wonderland  
Growing cloud by magic cloud,  
Under the silvery willow-tree  
In the school of Tenko:  
Kimi watched him, young and proud,  
Painting by the purple sea,  
Lying on the golden sand  
Watched his golden wings expand!  
(None but Love will understand  
All she hid from Tenko.)

He could paint her tree and flower,  
Sea and spray and wizard's tower,  
With one stroke, now hard, now soft,  
Under the silvery willow-tree  
In the school of Tenko:  
He could fling a bird aloft,  
Splash a dragon in the sea,  
Crown a princess in her bower,  
With one stroke of magic power;  
And she watched him, hour by hour,  
In the school of Tenko.

Yoichi Tenko, wondering, scanned  
 All the work of that young hand,  
     Gazed his kakemonos o'er,  
 Under the silvery willow-tree  
     In the school of Tenko :  
 "I can teach you nothing more,  
     Thought or craft or mystery ;  
 Let your golden wings expand,  
 They will shadow half the land,  
 All the world's at your command,  
     Come no more to Tenko."

*Lying on the golden sand,  
 Kimi watched his wings expand ;  
 Wept.—He could not understand  
     Why she wept, said Tenko.*

### III.

So, in her blue kimono,  
     Pale as the sickle moon  
 Glimmered thro' soft plum-branches  
     Blue in the dusk of June,  
 Stole she, willing and waning,  
     Frightened and unafraid,—  
 "Take me with you, Sawara,  
     Over the sea," she said.

Small and sadly beseeching,  
     Under the willow-tree,  
 Glimmered her face like a foam-flake  
     Drifting over the sea :  
 Pale as a drifting blossom,  
     Lifted her face to his eyes :  
 Slowly he gathered and held her  
     Under the drifting skies.

Poor little face cast backward,  
Better to see his own,  
Earth and heaven went past them  
Drifting: they two, alone  
Stood, immortal. He whispered—  
“Nothing can part us two!”  
Backward her sad little face went  
Drifting, and dreamed it true.

“Others are happy,” she murmured,  
“Maidens and men I have seen ;  
You are my king, Sawara,  
O, let me be your queen !  
If I am all too lowly,”  
Sadly she strove to smile,  
“Let me follow your footsteps,  
Your slave for a little while.”

Surely, he thought, I have painted  
Nothing so fair as this  
Moonlit almond blossom  
Sweet to fold and kiss,  
Brow that is filled with music,  
Shell of a faery sea,  
Eyes like the holy violets  
Brimmed with dew for me.

“Wait for Sawara,” he whispered,  
“Does not his whole heart yearn  
Now to his moon-bright maiden ?  
Wait, for he will return  
Rich as the wave on the moon’s path  
Rushing to claim his bride !”  
So they plighted their promise,  
And the ebbing sea-wave sighed.

## IV.

Moon and flower and butterfly,  
Earth and heaven went drifting by,  
Three long years while Kimi dreamed  
Under the silvery willow-tree  
In the school of Tenko,  
Steadfast while the whole world streamed  
Past her tow'rd Eternity ;  
Steadfast till with one great cry,  
Ringing to the gods on high,  
Golden wings should blind the sky  
And bring him back to Tenko.

Three long years and nought to say  
"Sweet, I come the golden way,  
Riding royally to the school  
Under the silvery willow-tree  
Claim my bride of Tenko ;  
Silver bells on a milk-white mule,  
Rose-red sails on an emerald sea !" . . .  
Kimi sometimes went to pray  
In the temple nigh the bay,  
Dreamed all night and gazed all day  
Over the sea from Tenko.

Far away his growing fame  
Lit the clouds. No message came  
From the sky, whereon she gazed  
Under the silvery willow-tree  
Far away from Tenko !  
Small white hands in the temple raised  
Pleaded with the Mystery,—  
"Stick of incense in the flame,  
Though my love forget my name,  
Help him, bless him, all the same,  
And . . . bring him back to Tenko !"



*Rose-white temple nigh the bay,  
Hush ! for Kimi comes to pray,  
Dream all night and gaze all day  
Over the sea from Tenko.*

## v.

So, when the rich young merchant  
Showed him his bags of gold,  
Yoichi Tenko, the painter,  
Gave him her hand to hold,  
Said, "You shall wed him, O Kimi :"  
Softly he lied and smiled—  
*"Yea, for Sawara is wedded !  
Let him not mock you, child."*

Dumbly she turned and left them,  
Never a word or cry  
Broke from her lips' gray petals  
Under the drifting sky :  
Down to the spray and the rainbows,  
Where she had watched him of old  
Painting the rose-red islands,  
Painting the sand's wet gold,

Down to their dreams of the sunset,  
Frail as a flower's white ghost,  
Lonely and lost she wandered  
Down to the darkening coast ;  
Lost in the drifting midnight,  
Weeping, desolate, blind.  
Many went out to seek her :  
Never a heart could find.

Yoichi Tenko, the painter,  
Plucked from his willow-tree  
Two big paper lanterns  
And ran to the brink of the sea ;

Over his head he held them,  
Crying, and only heard,  
Somewhere, out in the darkness,  
The cry of a wandering bird.

## VI.

Peonies, peonies thronged the May  
When in royal-rich array  
Came Sawara to the school  
Under the silvery willow-tree—  
To the school of Tenko!  
Silver bells on a milk-white mule,  
Rose-red sails on an emerald sea!  
Over the bloom of the cherry spray,  
Peonies, peonies dimmed the day;  
And he rode the royal way  
Back to Yoichi Tenko.

Yoichi Tenko, half afraid,  
Whispered, "Wed some other maid;  
Kimi left me all alone  
Under the silvery willow-tree,  
Left me," whispered Tenko,  
"Kimi had a heart of stone!"—  
"Kimi, Kimi? Who is she?  
Kimi? Ah—the child that played  
Round the willow-tree. She prayed  
Often; and, whate'er I said,  
She believed it, Tenko."

He had come to paint anew  
Those dim isles of rose and blue,  
For a palace far away,  
Under the silvery willow-tree—  
So he said to Tenko;  
And he painted, day by day,  
Golden visions of the sea.

No, he had not come to woo ;  
Yet, had Kimi proven true,  
Doubtless he had loved her too,  
Hardly less than Tenko.

Since the thought was in his head,  
He would make his choice and wed ;  
And a lovely maid he chose  
Under the silvery willow-tree.

"Fairer far," said Tenko.

"Kimi had a twisted nose,  
And a foot too small, for me,  
And her face was dull as lead !"

"Nay, a flower, be it white or red,  
*Is* a flower," Sawara said !

"So it is," said Tenko.

## VII.

Great Sawara, the painter,  
Sought, on a day of days,  
One of the peacock islands  
Out in the sunset haze :  
Rose-red sails on the water  
Carried him quickly nigh ;  
There would he paint him a wonder  
Worthy of Hokusai.

Lo, as he leapt o'er the creaming  
Roses of faery foam,  
Out of the green-lipped caverns  
Under the isle's blue dome,  
White as a drifting snow-flake,  
White as the moon's white flame,  
White as a ghost from the darkness,  
Little O Kimi came.

"Long I have waited, Sawara,  
Here in our sunset isle,  
Sawara, Sawara, Sawara,  
Look on me once, and smile ;  
Face I have watched so long for,  
Hands I have longed to hold,  
Sawara, Sawara, Sawara,  
Why is your heart so cold ?"

Surely, he thought, I have painted  
Nothing so fair as this  
Moonlit almond blossom  
Sweet to fold and kiss. . . .  
"Kimi," he said, "I am wedded !  
Hush, for it could not be !"  
"Kiss me one kiss," she whispered,  
"Me also, even me."

Small and terribly drifting  
Backward, her sad white face  
Lifted up to Sawara  
Once, in that lonely place,  
White as a drifting blossom  
Under his wondering eyes,  
Slowly he gathered and held her  
Under the drifting skies.

"Others are happy," she whispered,  
"Maidens and men I have seen :  
Be happy, be happy, Sawara !  
The other—shall be—your queen !  
Kiss me one kiss for parting."  
Trembling she lifted her head,  
Then like a broken blossom  
It fell on his arm. She was dead.

## VIII.

Much impressed, Sawara straight  
(Though the hour was growing late)  
    Made a sketch of Kimi lying  
By the lonely, sighing sea,  
    Brought it back to Tenko.  
Tenko looked it over crying  
    (Under the silvery willow-tree).  
"You have burst the golden gate !  
You have conquered Time and Fate !  
Hokusai is not so great !  
    This is art," said Tenko !

## THE ENCHANTED ISLAND.

## I.

I REMEMBER—

a breath, a breath  
 Blown thro' the rosy gates of birth,  
 A morning freshness not of the earth  
 But cool and strange and lovely as death  
 In Paradise, in Paradise,  
 When, all to suffer the old sweet pain  
 Closing his immortal eyes  
 Wonder-wild an angel lies  
 With wings of rainbow-tinctured grain  
 Withering till—ah, wonder-wild,  
 Here on the dawning earth again  
 He wakes, a little child.

## II.

I remember—

a gleam, a gleam  
 Of sparkling waves and warm blue sky  
 Far away and long ago,  
 Or ever I knew that youth could die ;  
 And out of the dawn, the dawn, the dawn,  
 Into the unknown life we sailed  
 As out of sleep into a dream,  
 And, as with elfin cables drawn  
 In dusk of purple over the glowing  
 Wrinkled measureless emerald sea,  
 The light cloud shadows larger far

Than the sweet shapes which drew them on,  
Fairly delicate shadows flowing  
Between us and the morning star  
Chased us all a summer's day,  
And our sail like a dew-lit blossom shone  
Till, over a rainbow haze of spray  
That arched a reef of surf like snow

—Far away and long ago—

We saw the sky-line rosily enrailed  
With tufted peaks above a smooth lagoon  
Which growing, growing, growing as we sailed  
Curved all around them like a crescent moon ;  
And then we saw the purple-shadowed creeks,  
The feathery palms, the gleaming golden streaks  
Of sand, and nearer yet, like jewels of fire  
Streaming between the boughs, or floating higher  
Like tiny sunset-clouds in noon-day skies,  
The birds of Paradise.

### III.

The island floated in the air,  
Its image floated in the sea :  
Which was the shadow? Both were fair :  
Like sister souls they seemed to be ;  
And one was dreaming and asleep,  
And one bent down from Paradise  
To kiss with radiance in the deep  
The darkling lips and eyes.

And, mingling softly in their dreams,  
That holy kiss of sea and sky  
Transfused the shadows and the gleams  
Of Time and of Eternity :  
The dusky face looked up and gave  
To heaven its golden shadowed calm ;  
The face of light fulfilled the wave  
With blissful wings and fans of palm.

Above, the tufted rosy peaks  
That melted in the warm blue skies,  
Below, the purple-shadowed creeks  
That glassed the birds of Paradise—  
A bridal knot, it hung in heaven ;  
And, all around, the still lagoon  
From bloom of dawn to blush of even  
Curved like a crescent moon.

And there we wandered evermore  
Thro' boyhood's everlasting years,  
Listening the murmur of the shore  
As one that lifts a shell and hears  
The murmur of forgotten seas  
Around some lost Broceliande,  
The sigh of sweet Eternities  
That turn the world to fairy-land,

That turned our isle to a single pearl  
Glowing in measureless waves of wine !  
Above, below, the clouds would curl,  
Above, below, the stars would shine  
In sky and sea. We hung in heaven !  
Time and space were but elfin-sweet  
Rock-bound pools for the dawn and even  
To wade with their rosy feet.

Our pirate cavern faced the West :  
We closed its door with screens of palm,  
While some went out to seek the nest  
Wherein the Phoenix, breathing balm,  
Burns and dies to live for ever  
(How should we dream we lived to die ?)  
And some would fish in the purple river  
That thro' the hills brought down the sky.



And some would dive in the lagoon  
Like sunbeams, and all round our isle  
Swim thro' the lovely crescent moon,  
Glimpsing, for breathless mile on mile,  
The wild sea-woods that bloomed below,  
The rainbow fish, the coral cave  
Where vanishing swift as melting snow  
A mermaid's arm would wave.

Then, dashing shoreward thro' the spray  
On sun-lit sands they cast them down,  
Or in the white sea-daisies lay  
With sun-stained bodies rosy-brown,  
Content to watch the foam-bows flee  
Across the shelving reefs and bars,  
With wild eyes gazing out to sea  
Like happy haunted stars.

## IV.

And O, the wild sea-maiden  
Drifting through the starlit air,  
With white arms blossom-laden  
And the sea-scents in her hair :  
Sometimes we heard her singing  
The midnight forest through,  
Or saw a soft hand flinging  
Blossoms drenched with starry dew  
Into the dreaming purple cave ;  
And, sometimes, far and far away  
Beheld across the glooming wave  
Beyond the dark lagoon,  
Beyond the silvery foaming bar,  
The black bright rock whereon she lay  
Like a honey-coloured star  
Singing to the breathless moon,  
Singing in the silent night  
Till the stars for sheer delight

Closed their eyes, and drowsy birds  
 On the midmost forest spray  
 Took their heads from out their wings,  
 Thinking—it is Ariel sings  
 And we must catch the witching words  
 And sing them o'er by day.

## V.

And then, there came a breath, a breath  
 Cool and strange and dark as death,  
 A stealing shadow, not of the earth  
 But fresh and wonder-wild as birth.  
 I know not when the hour began  
 That changed the child's heart in the man,  
 Or when the colours began to wane,  
 But all our roseate island lay  
 Stricken, as when an angel dies  
 With wings of rainbow-tinctured grain  
 Withering, and his radiant eyes  
 Closing. Pitiless walls of gray  
 Gathered around us, a growing tomb  
 From which it seemed not death or doom  
 Could roll the stone away.

## VI.

Yet—I remember—  
                                           a gleam, a gleam,  
 (Or ever I dreamed that youth could die!)  
 Of sparkling waves and warm blue sky  
 As out of sleep into a dream,  
 Wonder-wild for the old sweet pain,  
 We sailed into that unknown sea  
 Through the gates of Eternity.

Peacefully close your mortal eyes  
 For ye shall wake to it again  
 In Paradise, in Paradise.

## UNITY.

## I.

HEART of my heart, the world is young ;  
 Love lies hidden in every rose !  
 Every song that the skylark sung  
 Once, we thought, must come to a close :  
 Now we know the spirit of song,  
 Song that is merged in the chant of the whole,  
 Hand in hand as we wander along,  
 What should we doubt of the years that roll ?

## II.

Heart of my heart, we cannot die !  
 Love triumphant in flower and tree,  
 Every life that laughs at the sky  
 Tells us nothing can cease to be :  
 One, we are one with a song to-day,  
 One with the clover that scents the wold,  
 One with the Unknown, far away,  
 One with the stars, when earth grows old.

## III.

Heart of my heart, we are one with the wind,  
 One with the clouds that are whirled o'er the lea,  
 One in many, O broken and blind,  
 One as the waves are at one with the sea !  
 Ay ! when life seems scattered apart,  
 Darkens, ends as a tale that is told,  
 One, we are one, O heart of my heart,  
 One, still one, while the world grows old.

## THE HILL-FLOWER.

*It is my faith that every flower*

*Enjoys the air it breathes—*

So was it sung one golden hour

Among the woodbine wreaths ;

And yet, though wet with living dew,

The song seemed far more sweet than true.

Blind creatures of the sun and air

I dreamed it but a dream

That, like Narcissus, would confer

With self in every stream,

And to the leaves and boughs impart

The tremors of a human heart.

To-day a golden pinion stirred

The world's Bethesda pool,

And I believed the song I heard

Nor put my heart to school ;

And through the rainbows of the dream

I saw the gates of Eden gleam.

The rain had ceased. The great hills rolled

In silence to the deep :

The gorse in waves of green and gold

Perfumed their lonely sleep ;

And, at my feet, one elfin flower

Drooped, blind with glories of the shower.

I stooped—a giant from the sky—  
Above its piteous shield,  
And, suddenly, the dream went by,  
And there—was heaven revealed !  
I stooped to pluck it ; but my hand  
Paused, mid-way, o'er its fairyland.

Not of mine own was that strange voice,  
“ Pluck—tear a star from heaven ! ”  
Mine only was the awful choice  
To scoff and be forgiven  
Or hear the very grass I trod  
Whispering the gentle thoughts of God.

I know not if the hill-flower's place  
Beneath that mighty sky,  
Its lonely and aspiring grace,  
Its beauty born to die,  
Touched me, I know it seemed to be  
Cherished by all Eternity.

Man, doomed to crush at every stride  
A hundred lives like this  
Which by their weakness were allied,  
If by naught else, to his,  
Can only for a flash discern  
What passion through the whole doth yearn.

Not into words can I distil  
The pity or the pain  
Which hallowing all that lonely hill  
Cried out “ Refrain, refrain, ”  
Then breathed from earth and sky and sea,  
Herein you did it unto Me.

Somewhile that hill was heaven's own breast,  
The flower its joy and grief,  
Hugged close and fostered and caressed  
In every brief bright leaf :  
And, ere I went thro' sun and dew,  
I leant and gently touched it, too.

## ACTÆON.

"Who stood beside the naked Swift-footed  
 And bound his forehead with Proserpine's hair,"  
 —BROWNING (*Pauline*).

## I.

*LIGHT of beauty, O, "perfect in whiteness,"  
 Softly suffused thro' the world's dark shrouds,  
 Kindling them all as they pass by thy brightness.—  
 Hills, men, cities,—a pageant of clouds,  
 Thou to whom Life and Time surrender  
 All earth's forms as to heaven's deep care.  
 Who shall pierce to thy naked splendour,  
 Bind his brows with thy hair?*

## II.

Swift thro' the sprays when Spring grew bolder  
 Young Actæon swept to the chase!  
 Golden the fawn-skin, back from the shoulder  
 Flowing, set free the limbs' lithe grace,  
 Muscles of satin that rippled like sunny  
 Streams,—a hunter, a young athlete,  
 Scattering dews and crushing out honey  
 Under his sandalled feet.

## III.

Sunset softened the crags of the mountain.  
 Silence melted the hunter's heart,  
 Only the sob of a falling fountain  
 Pulsed in a deep ravine apart:

All the forest seemed waiting breathless,  
Eager to whisper the dying day  
Some rich word that should utter the deathless  
Secret of youth and May.

## IV.

Down, as to May thro' the flowers that attend her,  
Slowly, on tip-toe, down the ravine  
Fair as the sun-god, poising a slender  
Spear like a moon-shaft silver and green,  
Stole he! Ah, did the oak-wood ponder  
Youth's glad dream in its heart of gloom?  
Dryad or fawn was it started yonder?  
Ah, what whisper of doom?

## V.

Gold, thro' the ferns as he gazed and listened,  
Shone the soul of the wood's deep dream,  
One bright glade and a pool that glistened  
Full in the face of the sun's last gleam,—  
Gold in the heart of a violet dingle!  
Young Actæon, beware! beware!  
Who shall track, while the pulses tingle,  
Spring to her woodland lair?

## VI.

See, at his feet, what mystical quiver,  
Maiden's girdle and robe of snow,  
Tossed aside by the green glen-river  
Ere she bathed in the pool below?  
All the fragrance of April meets him  
Full in the face with its young sweet breath;  
Yet, as he steals to the glade, there greets him—  
Hush, what whisper of death?



## VII.

Lo, in the violets, lazily dreaming,  
Young Diana, the huntress, lies :  
One white side thro' the violets gleaming  
Heaves and sinks with her golden sighs,  
One white breast like a diamond crownet  
Couched in a velvet casket glows,  
One white arm, tho' the violets drown it,  
Thrills their purple with rose.

## VIII.

Buried in fragrance, the half-moon flashes,  
Beautiful, clouded, from head to heel :  
One white foot in the warm wave splashes,  
Violets tremble and half reveal,  
Half conceal, as they kiss, the slender  
Slope and curve of her sleeping limbs :  
Violets bury one half the splendour ;  
Still, as thro' heaven, she swims.

## IX.

Cold as the white rose waking at daybreak  
Lifts the light of her lovely face,  
Poised on an arm she watches the spray break  
Over the slim white ankle's grace,  
Watches the wave that sleeplessly tosses  
Kissing the pure foot's pink sea-shells,  
Watches the long-leaved heaven-dark mosses  
Drowning their star-bright bells.

## X.

Swift as the Spring where the South has brightened  
Earth with bloom in one passionate night,  
Swift as the violet heavens had lightened  
Swift to perfection, blinding, white,

Dian arose : and Actæon saw her,  
 Only he since the world began !  
 Only in dreams could Endymion draw her  
 Down to the heart of man.

## XI.

Fair as the dawn upon Himalaya  
 Anger flashed from her cheek's pure rose,  
 Alpine peaks at the passage of Maia  
 Flushed not fair as her breasts' white snows.  
 Ah, fair form of the heaven's completeness,  
 Who shall sing thee or who shall say  
 Whence that "high perfection of sweetness,"  
 Perfect to save or slay?

## XII.

*Perfect in beauty, beauty the portal  
 Here on earth to the world's deep shrine,  
 Beauty hidden in all things mortal,  
 Who shall mingle his eyes with thine ?  
 Thou, to whom Life and Death surrender  
 All earth's forms as to heaven's deep care,  
 Who shall pierce to thy naked splendour,  
 Bind his brows with thy hair ?*

## XIII.

*Beauty, perfect in blinding whiteness,  
 Softly suffused thro' the world's dark shrouds,  
 Kindling them all as they pass by her brightness,—  
 Hills, men, cities,—a pageant of clouds,  
 She, the unchanging, shepherds their changes,  
 Bids them mingle and form and flow,  
 Flowers and flocks and the great hill-ranges  
 Follow her cry and go.*

## XIV.

Swift as the sweet June lightning flashes,  
Down she stoops to the purpling pool,  
Sudden and swift her white hand dashes  
Rainbow mists in his eyes! "Ah, fool!  
Hunter," she cries to the young Actæon,  
"Change to the hunted, rise and fly,  
Swift ere the wild pack utter its pæan,  
Swift for thy hounds draw nigh!"

## XV.

Lo, as he trembles, the greenwood branches  
Dusk his brows with their antlered pride!  
Lo, as a stag thrown back on its haunches  
Quivers, with velvet nostrils wide,  
Lo, he changes! The soft fur darkens  
Down to the fetlock's lifted fear!—  
Hounds are baying!—he snuffs and hearkens,  
"Fly, for the stag is here!"

## XVI.

Swift he leapt thro' the ferns, Actæon,  
Young Actæon, the lordly stag:  
Full and mellow the deep-mouthed pæan  
Swelled behind him from crag to crag:  
Well he remembered that sweet throat leading,  
Wild with terror he raced and strained,  
On thro' the darkness, thorn-swept, bleeding:  
Ever they gained and gained!

## XVII.

Death, like a darkling huntsman holloed—  
Swift, Actæon!—desire and shame  
Leading the pack of the passions followed,  
Red jaws frothing with white-hot flame,

Volleying out of the glen, they leapt up,  
Snapped and fell short of the foam-flecked thighs. . . .  
Inch by terrible inch they crept up,  
Shadows with blood-shot eyes.

## XVIII.

Still with his great heart bursting asunder  
Still thro' the night he struggled and bled;  
Suddenly round him the pack's low thunder  
Surged, the hounds that his own hand fed  
Fastened in his throat, with red jaws drinking  
Deep!—for a moment his antlered pride  
Soared o'er their passionate seas, then, sinking,  
Fell for the fangs to divide.

## XIX.

*Light of beauty, O, perfect in whiteness,  
Softly suffused thro' the years' dark veils,  
Kindling them all as they pass by her brightness.  
Filling our hearts with her old-world tales,  
She, the unchanging, shepherds their changes,  
Bids them mingle and form and flow,  
Flowers and flocks and the great hill-ranges  
Follow her cry and go.*

## XX.

Still, in the violets, lazily dreaming  
Young Diana, the huntress, lies:  
One white side thro' the violets gleaming  
Heaves and sinks with her golden sighs;  
One white breast like a diamond crownet  
Couched in a velvet casket glows,  
One white arm, tho' the violets drown it,  
Thrills their purple with rose.

## LUCIFER'S FEAST.

(A EUROPEAN NIGHTMARE.)

To celebrate the ascent of man, one gorgeous night  
 Lucifer gave a feast.

Its world-bewildering light

Danced in Belshazzar's tomb, and the old kings dead  
 and gone  
 Felt their dust creep to jewels in crumbling Babylon.

Two nations were His guests—the top and flower of Time,  
 The fore-front of an age which now had learned to climb  
 The slopes where Newton knelt, the heights that Shake-  
 speare trod,  
 The mountains whence Beethoven rolled the voice of God.  
 Lucifer's feasting-lamps were like the morning stars,  
 But at the board-head shone the blood-red lamp of Mars.

League upon glittering league, white front and flabby face  
 Bent o'er the groaning board. Twelve brave men droned  
 the grace ;  
 But with instinctive tact, in courtesy to their Host,  
 Omitted God the Son and God the Holy Ghost,  
 And to the God of Battles raised their humble prayers.

Then, then, like thunder, all the guests drew up their  
 chairs.

By each a drinking-cup, yellow, almost, as gold,  
*(The blue eye-sockets gave the thumbs a good firm hold)*  
 Adorned the flowery board. Could even brave men shrink?

Why if the cups *were* skulls, they had red wine to drink?  
 And had not each a napkin, white and peaked and proud,  
 Waiting to wipe his mouth? A napkin? Nay, a shroud!  
 This was a giants' feast, on hell's imperial scale.  
 The blades glistened.

The shrouds—O, in one snowy gale,  
 The pink hands fluttered them out, and spread them on  
 their knees.  
 Who knew what gout's might drop, what filthy flakes of  
 grease,  
 Now that o'er every shoulder, through the coiling steam,  
 Inhuman faces peered, with wolfish eyes a-gleam,  
 And grey-faced vampire Lusts that whinneyed in each ear  
 Hints of the hideous courses?

None may name them here?  
 None? And we may not see! The distant cauldrons cloak  
 The lava-coloured plains with clouds of umber smoke.  
 Nay, by that shrapnel-light, by those wild shooting stars  
 That rip the clouds away with fiercer fire than Mars,  
 They are painted sharp as death. If these can eat and drink  
 Chatter and laugh and rattle their knives, why should we  
 shrink

From empty names? We know those ghastly gleams are  
 true:

Why should Christ cry again—*They know not what they do?*  
 They, heirs of all the ages, sons of Shakespeare's land,  
 They, brothers of Beethoven, smiling, cultured, bland,  
 Whisper with sidling heads to ghouls with bloody lips.

Each takes upon his plate a small round thing that drips  
 And quivers, a child's heart.

Miles on miles  
 The glittering table bends o'er that first course, and smiles;

For, through the wreaths of smoke, the grey Lusts bear aloft  
The second course, on leaden chargers, large and soft,  
Bodies of women, steaming in an opal mist,  
Red-branded here and there where vampire-teeth have  
kissed,

But white as pig's flesh, newly killed, and cleanly dressed,  
A lemon in each mouth and roses round each breast,  
Emblems to show how deeply, sweetly satisfied,  
The breasts, the lips, can sleep, whose children fought and  
died

For — what? For country? God, once more Thy  
shrapnel-light!

Let those dark slaughter-houses burst upon our sight,  
These kitchens are too clean, too near the tiring room!  
Let Thy white shrapnel rend those filthier veils of gloom,  
Rip the last fogs away and strip the foul thing bare!  
One lightning-picture—see—yon bayonet-bristling square  
Mown down, mown down, mown down, wild swathes of  
crimson wheat,

The white-eyed charge, the blast, the terrible retreat,  
The blood-greased wheels of cannon thundering into line  
O'er that red writhe of pain, rent groin and shattered spine,  
The moaning faceless face that kissed its child last night,  
The raw pulp of the heart that beat for love's delight,  
The heap of twisting bodies, clotted and congealed  
In one red huddle of anguish on the loathsome field,  
The seas of obscene slaughter spewing their blood-red yeast,  
Multitudes pouring out their entrails for the feast,  
Knowing not why, but dying, they think, for some high  
cause,

Dying for "hearth and home," their flags, their creeds,  
their laws.

Ask of the Bulls and Bears, ask if they understand  
How both great grappling armies bleed for their own land;  
For in that faith they die! These hoodwinked thousands  
die

Simply as heroes, gulled by hell's profoundest lie.

Who keeps the slaughter-house? Not these, not these  
 who gain  
 Nought but the sergeant's shilling and the homeless pain!  
 Who pulls the ropes? Not these, who buy their crust of  
 bread  
 With the salt sweat of labour! These but bury their dead  
 Then sweat again for food!

Christ, is the hour not come,  
 To send forth one great voice and strike this dark hell  
 dumb,  
 A voice to out-crash the cannon, one united cry  
 To sweep these wild-beast standards down that stain the sky,  
 To hurl these Lions and Bears and Eagles to their doom,  
 One voice, one heart, one soul, one fire that shall consume  
 The last red reeking shreds that flicker against the blast  
 And purge the Augean stalls we call "our glorious past"!  
 One voice from dawn and sunset, one almighty voice,  
 Full-throated as the sea—ye sons o' the earth, rejoice!  
 Beneath the all-loving sky, confederate kings ye stand,  
 Fling open wide the gates o' the world-wide Fatherland.

Poor fools, we dare not dream it! We that pule and  
 whine  
 Of art and science, we, whose great souls leave no shrine  
 Unshattered, we that climb the Sinai Shakespeare trod,  
 The Olivets where Beethoven walked and talked with God,  
 We that have weighed the stars and reined the lightning, we  
 That stare thro' heaven and plant our footsteps in the sea,  
 We whose great souls have risen so far above the creeds  
 That we can jest at Christ and leave Him where He bleeds,  
 A legend of the dark, a tale so false or true  
 That howsoe'er we jest at Him, the jest sounds new.  
 (Our weariest dinner-tables never tire of that!)  
 Let the clown sport with Christ, never the jest falls flat!)  
 Poor fools, we dare not dream a dream so strange, so  
 great,  
 As on this ball of dust to found one "world-wide state,"  
 To float one common flag above our little lands,



And ere our little sun grows cold to clasp our hands  
In friendship for a moment !

. . . . .

Hark, the violins

Are swooning through the mist. The great blue band  
begins,  
Playing, in dainty scorn, a hymn we used to know,  
How long was it, ten thousand thousand years ago?

*There is a green hill far away  
Beside a City wall !—*  
And O, the music swung a-stray  
With a solemn dying fall;  
For it was a pleasant jest to play  
Hymns in the Devil's Hall.

And yet, and yet, if aught be true,  
This dream we left behind,  
This childish Christ, be-mocked anew  
To please the men of mind,  
Yet hung so far beyond the flight  
Of our most lofty thought  
That—Lucifer laughed *at* us that night,  
Not *with* us, as he ought.

Beneath the blood-red lamp of Mars,  
Cloaked with a scarlet cloud  
He gazed along the line of stars  
Above the guzzling crowd :  
Sinister, thunder-scarred, he raised  
His great world-wandering eyes,  
And on some distant vision gazed  
Beyond our cloudy skies.

*"Poor bats,"* he sneered, *"their jungle-dark  
Civilisation's noon !*  
*Poor wolves, that hunt in packs and bark  
Beneath the grinning moon ;*

*Poor fools, that cast the cross away,  
 Before they break the sword ;  
 Poor sots, who take the night for day ;  
 Have mercy on me, Lord.*

*Beyond their wisdom's deepest skies  
 I see Thee hanging yet,  
 The love still hungering in Thine eyes,  
 Thy plaited crown still wet !  
 Thine arms outstretched to fold them all  
 Beneath Thy sheltering breast ;  
 But—since they will not hear Thy call,  
 Lord, I forbear to jest.*

*Lord, I forbear ! The day I fell  
 I fell at least thro' pride !  
 Rather than these should share my hell  
 Take me, thou Crucified !  
 O, let me share Thy cross of grief,  
 And let me work Thy will,  
 As morning star, or dying thief,  
 Thy fallen angel still.*

*Lord, I forbear ! For Thee, at least,  
 In pain so like to mine,  
 The mighty meaning of their feast  
 Is plain as bread and wine :  
 O, smile once more, far off, alone !  
 Since these nor hear nor see,  
 From my deep hell, so like Thine own,  
 Lord Christ, I pity Thee.*

Yet once again, he thought, they shall be fully tried,  
 If they be devils or fools too light for hell's deep pride.

The champ of teeth was over, and the reeking room  
 Gaped for the speeches now. Across the sulphurous fume

Lucifer gave a sign. The guests stood thundering up !  
"Gentlemen, charge your glasses !"

Every yellow cup  
Frothed with the crimson blood. They brandished them  
on high !

"Gentlemen, drink to those who fight and know not why !"

And in the bubbling blood each nose was buried deep.  
"Gentlemen, drink to those who sowed that we might reap !  
Drink to the pomp, pride, circumstance, of glorious war,  
The grand self-sacrifice that made us what we are !  
And drink to the peace-lovers who believe that peace  
Is War, red, bloody War ; for War can never cease  
Unless we drain the veins of peace to fatten WAR !  
Gentlemen, drink to the brains that made us what we are !  
Drink to self-sacrifice that helps us all to shake  
The world with tramp of armies. Germany, awake !  
England, awake ! Shakespeare's, Beethoven's Fatherland,  
Are you not both aware, do you not understand,  
Self-sacrifice is competition ? It is the law  
Of Life, and so, though both of you are wholly right,  
Self-sacrifice requires that both of you should fight."  
And "Hoch ! hoch ! hoch !" they cried ; and "Hip, hip,  
hip, Hurrah !"

This raised the gorge of Lucifer. With one deep "Bah,"  
Above those croaking toads he towered like Gabriel ;

Then straightway left the table and went home to hell.

## VETERANS.

(WRITTEN FOR THE RELIEF FUND OF THE  
CRIMEAN VETERANS.)

## I.

WHEN the last charge sounds  
And the battle thunders o'er the plain,  
Thunders o'er the trenches where the red streams flow,  
Will it not be well with us,  
Veterans, veterans,  
If, beneath your torn old flag, we burst upon the foe ?

## II.

When the last post sounds  
And the night is on the battle-field,  
Night and rest at last from all the tumult of our wars,  
Will it not be well with us,  
Veterans, veterans,  
If, with duty done like yours, we lie beneath the stars ?

## III.

When the great reveille sounds  
For the terrible last Sabaoth,  
All the legions of the dead shall hear the trumpet ring !  
Will it not be well with us,  
Veterans, veterans,  
If, beneath your torn old flag, we rise to meet our king ?

## THE QUEST RENEWED.

It is too soon, too soon, though time be brief,  
 Quite to forswear thy quest,  
 O Light, whose farewell dyes the falling leaf,  
 Fades thro' the fading West.

Thou'rt flown too soon ! I stretch my hands out still,  
 O, Light of Life, to Thee,  
 Who leav'st an Olivet in each far blue hill,  
 A sorrow on every sea.

It is too soon, here while the loud world roars  
 For wealth and power and fame,  
 Too soon quite to forget those other shores  
 Afar, from whence I came ;

Too soon even to forget the first dear dream  
 Dreamed far away, when tears could freely flow ;  
 And life seemed infinite, as that sky's great gleam  
 Deepened, to which I go,

Too soon even to forget the fluttering fire  
 And those old books beside the friendly hearth,  
 When time seemed endless as my own desire,  
 And angels walked our earth ;

Too soon quite to forget amid the throng  
What once the silent hills, the sounding beach  
Taught me—where singing was the prize of song,  
And heaven within my reach.

It is too soon amid the cynic sneers,  
The sophist smiles, the greedy mouths and hands,  
Quite to forget the light of those dead years  
And my lost mountain-lands ;

Too soon to lose that everlasting hope  
(For so it seemed) of youth in love's pure reign,  
Though while I linger on this darkening slope  
Nought seems quite worth the pain.

It is too soon for me to break that trust,  
O, Light of Light, flown far past sun and moon,  
Burn back thro' this dark panoply of dust ;  
Or let me follow—soon.

## THE LIGHTS OF HOME.

PILOT, how far from home?—

Not far, not far to-night,

A flight of spray, a sea-bird's flight,

A flight of tossing foam,

And then the lights of home!—

And, yet again, how far?

Seems you the way so brief?

Those lights beyond the roaring reef

Were lights of moon and star,

Far, far, none knows how far!

Pilot, how far from home?—

The great stars pass away

Before Him as a flight of spray,

Moons as a flight of foam!

I see the lights of home.

## NEW POEMS

## 'TWEEN THE LIGHTS.

"The Nine men's morrice is filled up with mud . . .  
From our debate, from our dissension."

—SHAKESPEARE.

## I.

FAIRIES, come back ! We have not seen  
Your dusky foot-prints on the green  
This many a year. No frolic now  
Shakes the dew from the hawthorn-bough.  
Never a man and never a maid  
Spies you in the blue-bell shade ;  
Yet, where the nine men's morrice stood,  
Our spades are clearing out the mud.

*Chorus.—Come, little irised heralds, fling  
Earth's Eden-gates apart, and sing  
The bright eyes and the cordial hand  
Of brotherhood thro' all our land.*

## II.

Fairies, come back ! Our pomp of gold,  
Our blazing noon, grows gray and old ;  
The scornful glittering ages wane :  
Forgive, forget, come back again.



This is our England's Hallowe'en !  
Come, trip it, trip it o'er the green,  
Trip it, amidst the roaring mart,  
In the still meadows of the heart.

*Come, little irised heralds, fling  
Earth's Eden-gates apart, and sing  
The bright eyes and the cordial hand  
Of brotherhood thro' all our land.*

## III.

Fairies, come back ! Once more the gleams  
Of your lost Eden haunt our dreams,  
Where Evil, at the touch of Good,  
Withers in the Enchanted Wood :  
Fairies, come back ! Drive gaunt Despair  
And Famine to their ghoulish lair !  
Tap at each heart's bright window-pane  
Thro' merry England once again.

*Come, little irised heralds, fling  
Earth's Eden-gates apart, and sing  
The bright eyes and the cordial hand  
Of brotherhood thro' all our land.*

## IV.

Fairies, come back ! And, if you bring  
That long-expected song to sing,  
Ciss needs not, ere she welcomes you,  
To find a sixpence in her shoe !  
If, of the mud he clears away,  
Tom bears the ignoble stain to-day,  
Come back, and he will not forget  
The heavens that yearn beyond us yet.

*Come, little irised heralds, fling  
Earth's Eden-gates apart, and sing  
The bright eyes and the cordial hand  
Of brotherhood thro' all our land.*

## V.

Yet, if for this you will not come,  
 Your friends, the children, call you home  
 Fairies, they wear no May-day crowns,  
 Your playmates in those grim black towns  
 Look, fairies, how they peak and pine,  
 How hungrily their great eyes shine!  
 From fevered alley and foetid lane  
 Plead the thin arms—*Come back again!*

*Come, little irisea heralds, fling  
 Earth's Eden-gates apart, and sing  
 The bright eyes and the cordial hand  
 Of brotherhood thro' all our land.*

## VI.

We have named the stars and weighed the moon,  
 Counted our gains and . . . lost the boon,  
 If *this* be the end of all our lore—  
 To draw the blind and close the door!  
 O, lift the latch, slip in between  
 The things which we have heard and seen,  
 Slip thro' the fringes of the blind  
 Into the souls of all mankind.

*Come, little irised heralds, fling  
 Earth's Eden-gates apart, and sing  
 The bright eyes and the cordial hand  
 Of brotherhood thro' all our land.*

## VII.

Fairies, come back! Our wisdom dies  
 Beneath your deeper, starrier skies!  
 We have reined the lightning, probed the flower:  
 Bless, as of old, our twilight hour!

Bring dreams, and let the dreams be true,  
Bring hope that makes each heart anew,  
Bring love that knits all hearts in one ;  
Then—sing of heaven and bring the sun !

*Come, little irised heralds, fling  
Earth's Eden-gates apart, and sing  
The bright eyes and the cordial hand  
Of brotherhood thro' all our land.*

## CREATION.

IN the beginning, there was nought  
 But heaven, one Majesty of Light,  
 Beyond all speech, beyond all thought,  
 Beyond all depth, beyond all height,  
 Consummate heaven, the first and last,  
 Enfolding in its perfect prime  
 No future rushing to the past,  
 But one rapt Now, that knew not Space or Time.

Formless it was, being gold on gold,  
 And void—but with that complete Life  
 Where music could no wings unfold  
 Till lo, God smote the strings of strife!  
 “Myself unto Myself am Throne,  
 Myself unto Myself am Thrall  
 I that am All am all alone,”  
 He said, “Yea, I have nothing, having all.”

And, gathering round His mount of bliss  
 The angel-squadrons of His will,  
 He said, “One battle yet there is  
 To win, one vision to fulfil!  
 Since heaven where'er I gaze expands,  
 And power that knows no strife or cry,  
 Weakness shall bind and pierce My hands  
 And make a world for Me wherein to die.

All might, all vastness and all glory  
 Being Mine, I must descend and make  
 Out of My heart a song, a story  
 Of little hearts that burn and break ;  
 Out of My passion without end  
 I will make little azure seas,  
 And into small sad fields descend  
 And make green grass, white daisies, rustling trees."

Then shrank His angels, knowing He thrust  
 His arms out East and West and gave  
 For every little dream of dust  
 Part of His Life as to a grave !  
*'Enough, O Father, for Thy words  
 Have pierced Thy hands !'* But, low and sweet,  
 He said 'Sunsets and streams and birds,  
 And drifting clouds !'—The purple stained His feet.—

'Enough !' His angels moaned in fear,  
*'Father, Thy words have pierced Thy side !'*  
 He whispered 'Roses shall grow there,  
 And there must be a hawthorn-tide,  
 And ferns, dewy at dawn,' and still  
 They moaned—*Enough, the red drops bleed !*  
 'And,' sweet and low, 'on every hill,'  
 He said, 'I will have flocks and lambs to lead.'

His angels bowed their heads beneath  
 Their wings till that great pang was gone :  
*Pour not Thy soul out unto Death !*  
 They moaned, and still His Love flowed on,  
 "There shall be small white wings to stray  
 From bliss to bliss, from bloom to bloom,  
 And blue flowers in the wheat ; and—" *'Stay !*  
*Speak not,'* they cried, *'the word that seals Thy tomb !'*

He spake—"I have thought of a little child  
That I will have there to embark  
On small adventures in the wild,  
And front slight perils in the dark ;  
And I will hide from him and lure  
His laughing eyes with suns and moons,  
And rainbows that shall not endure ;  
And—when he is weary sing him drowsy tunes."

His angels fell before Him weeping  
' *Enough ! Tempt not the Gates of Hell !* '  
He said ' His soul is in his keeping  
That we may love each other well,  
And lest the dark too much affright him,  
I will strow countless little stars  
Across his childish skies to light him  
That he may wage in peace his mimic wars ;

And oft forget Me as he plays  
With swords and childish merchandize,  
Or with his elfin balance weighs,  
Or with his foot-rule metes, the skies ;  
Or builds his castles by the deep,  
Or tunnels through the rocks, and then—  
Turn to Me as he falls asleep,  
And, in his dreams, feel for My hand again.

And when he is older he shall be  
My friend and walk here at My side ;  
Or—when he wills—grow young with Me,  
And, to that happy world where once we died  
Descending through the calm blue weather,  
Buy life once more with our immortal breath,  
And wander through the little fields together,  
And taste of Love and Death.'

## THE PASSING OF THE KING.

SILENTLY over his vast imperial seas,  
 Over his sentinel fleets the Shadow swept  
 And all his armies slept.  
 There was but one quick challenge at the gate,  
 Then—the cold menace of that out-stretched hand,  
 Waving aside the panoplies of State,  
 Brought the last faithful watchers to their knees,  
 And lightning flashed the grief from land to land.

Mourn, Britain, mourn, not for a king alone!  
 This was the people's king! His purple throne  
 Was in their hearts. They shared it. Millions of swords  
 Could not have shaken it! Sharers of this doom,  
 This democratic doom which all men know,  
 His Common-weal, in this great common woe,  
 Veiling its head in the universal gloom,  
 With that majestic grief which knows not words,  
 Bows o'er a world-wide tomb.

Mourn, Europe, for our England set this Crown  
 In splendour past the reach of temporal power,  
 Secure above the thunders of the hour,  
 A sun in the great skies of her renown,  
 A sun to hold her wheeling worlds in one  
 By its own course of duty pre-ordained,  
 Where'er the meteors flash and fall, a sun  
 With its great course of duty!

So he reigned,  
And died in its observance. Mightier he  
Than any despot, in his people's love,  
He served that law which rules the Thrones above,  
That world-wide law which by the raging sea  
Abased the flatterers of Canúte and makes  
The King that abnegates all lesser power  
A rock in time of trouble and a tower  
Of strength where'er the tidal tempest breaks ;  
That world-wide law whose name is harmony,  
Whose service perfect freedom !

And *his* name  
*The Peace-maker*, through all the future years  
Shall burn, a glorious and prophetic flame,  
A beaconing sun that never shall go down,  
A sun to speed the world's diviner morrow,  
A sun that shines the brighter for our sorrow ;  
For, O, what splendour in a monarch's crown  
Vies with the splendour of his people's tears ?

And now, O now, while the sorrowful trumpet is blown,  
From island to continent, zone to imperial zone,  
And the flags of the nations are lowered in grief with our  
own ;

Now, while the roll of the drums that for battle were dumb  
When he reigned, salute his passing ; and low on the breeze  
From the snow-bound North to the Australasian seas  
Surges the solemn lament—O, shall it not come,  
A glimpse of that mightier union of all mankind ?  
Now, though our eyes, as they gaze on the vision, grow  
blind,

Now, while the world is all one funeral knell,  
And the mournful cannon thunder his great farewell,  
Now, while the bells of a thousand cities toll,  
Remember, O England, remember the ageless goal,  
Rally the slumbering faith in the depths of thy soul,



Lift up thine eyes to the Kingdom for which he fought,  
That Empire of Peace and Good-will, for which to his  
death-hour he wrought.

Then, then while the pomp of the world seems a little thing,  
Ay, though by the world it be said,

*The King is dead!*

We shall lift up our hearts and answer—*Long live the  
King!*

## THE SAILOR-KING.

THE fleet, the fleet puts out to sea  
 In a thunder of blinding foam to-night,  
 With a bursting wreck-strewn reef to lee,  
 But—a seaman fired yon beacon-light !  
 Seamen hailing a seaman, know—  
 Free-men crowning a free-man, sing—  
 The worth of that light where the great ships go,  
 The signal-fire of the king.

Cloud and wind may shift and veer :  
 This is steady and this is sure,  
 A signal over our hope and fear,  
 A pledge of the strength that shall endure—  
 Having no part in our storm-tossed strife—  
 A sign of union, which shall bring  
 Knowledge to men of their close-knit life,  
 The signal-fire of the king.

His friends are the old grey glorious waves  
 The wide world round, the wide world round,  
 That have roared with our guns and covered our graves  
 From Nombre Dios to Plymouth Sound ;  
 And his crown shall shine, a central sun  
 Round which the planet-nations sing,  
 Going their ways, but linked in one,  
 As the ships of our sailor-king.

Many the ships, but a single fleet ;  
Many the roads, but a single goal ;  
And a light, a light where all roads meet,  
The beacon-fire of an Empire's soul ;  
The worth of that light his seamen know,  
Through all the deaths that the storm can bring,  
The crown of their comrade-ship a-glow,  
The signal-fire of the king.

## THE FIDDLER'S FAREWELL.

WITH my fiddle to my shoulder,  
 And my hair turning gray,  
 And my heart growing older  
 I must shuffle on my way!  
 Tho' there's not a hearth to greet me  
 I must reap as I sowed,  
 And—the sunset shall meet me  
 At the turn of the road.

O, the whin's a dusky yellow  
 And the road a rosy white,  
 And the blackbird's call is mellow  
 At the falling of night;  
 And there's honey in the heather  
 Where we'll make our last abode,  
 My tunes and me together  
 At the turn of the road.

I have fiddled for your city  
 Thro' market-place and inn!  
 I have poured forth my pity  
 On your sorrow and your sin!  
 But your riches are your burden,  
 And your pleasure is your goad!  
 I've the whin-gold for guerdon  
 At the turn of the road.

Your village-lights 'll call me  
As the lights of home the dead ;  
But a black night befall me  
Ere your pillows rest my head !  
God be praised, tho' like a jewel  
Every cottage casement showed,  
There's a star that's not so cruel  
At the turn of the road.

Nay, beautiful and kindly  
Are the faces drawing nigh,  
But I gaze on them blindly  
And hasten, hasten by ;  
For O, no face of wonder  
On earth has ever glowed  
Like the One that waits me yonder  
At the turn of the road.

Her face is lit with splendour,  
She dwells beyond the skies ;  
But deep, deep and tender  
Are the tears in her eyes :  
The angels see them glistening  
In pity for my load,  
And—she's waiting there, she's listening,  
At the turn of the road.

## TO A PESSIMIST.

LIFE like a cruel mistress woos  
The passionate heart of man, you say,  
Only in mockery to refuse  
His love, at last, and turn away.

To me she seems a queen that knows  
How great is love—but ah, how rare!—  
And, pointing heavenward ere she goes,  
Gives him the rose from out her hair.

## MOUNT IDA.

[This poem commemorates an event of some years ago, when a young Englishman—still remembered by many of his contemporaries at Oxford—went up into Mount Ida and was never seen again.]

## I.

Not cypress, but this warm pine-plumage now  
 Fragrant with sap, I pluck ; nor bid you weep.  
 Ye Muses that still haunt the heavenly brow  
 Of Ida, though the ascent is hard and steep :  
 Weep not for him who left us wrapped in sleep  
 At dawn beneath the holy mountain's breast  
 And all alone from Ilion's gleaming shore  
 Clomb the high sea-ward glens, fain to drink deep  
 Of earth's old glory from your silent crest,  
     Take the cloud-conquering throne  
     Of gods, and gaze alone  
 Thro' heaven. Darkling we slept who saw his face no more.

## II.

Ah yet, in him hath Lycidas a brother,  
 And Adonaïs will not say him nay,  
 And Thyrsis to the breast of one sweet Mother  
 Welcomes him, climbing by the self-same way :

Quietly as a cloud at break of day  
Up the long glens of golden dew he stole  
    (And surely Bion called to him afar !)  
The tearful hyacinths, and the greenwood spray  
    Clinging to keep him from the sapphire goal,  
        Kept of his path no trace !  
    Upward the yearning face  
Clomb the ethereal height, calm as the morning star.

## III.

Ah yet, incline, dear Sisters, or my song  
    That with the light wings of the skimming swallow  
Must range the reedy slopes, will work him wrong !  
    And with some golden shaft do thou, Apollo,  
Show the pine-shadowed path that none may follow ;  
    For, as the blue air shuts behind a bird,  
    Round him closed Ida's cloudy woods and rills !  
Day-long, night-long, by echoing height and hollow,  
    We called him, but our tumult died unheard :  
        Down from the scornful sky  
        Our faint wing-broken cry  
Fluttered and perished among the many-folded hills.

## IV.

Ay, though we clomb each faint-flushed peak of vision,  
    Nought but our own sad faces we divined :  
Thy radiant way still laughed us to derision,  
    And still revengeful Echo proved unkind ;  
And oft our faithless hearts half feared to find  
    Thy cold corse in some dark mist-drenched ravine  
    Where the white foam flashed headlong to the sea :  
How should we find thee, spirits deaf and blind  
    Even to the things which we had heard and seen ?  
        Eyes that could see no more  
        The old light on sea and shore,  
What should they hope or fear to find ?   They found  
    not thee ;



## V.

For thou wast ever alien to our skies,  
 A wistful stray of radiance on this earth,  
 A changeling with deep memories in thine eyes  
 Mistily gazing thro' our loud-voiced mirth  
 To some fair land beyond the gates of birth ;  
 Yet, as a star thro' clouds, thou still didst shed  
 Through our dark world thy lovelier, rarer glow ;  
 Time, like a picture of but little worth,  
 Before thy young hand lifelessly outspread,  
 At one light stroke from thee  
 Gleamed with Eternity ;  
 Thou gav'st the master's touch, and we—we did not know,

## VI.

Not though we gazed from heaven o'er Ilion  
 Dreaming on earth below, mistily crowned  
 With towering memories, and beyond her shone  
 The wine-dark seas Achilles heard resound !  
 Only, and after many days, we found  
 Dabbled with dew, at border of a wood  
 Bedded in hyacinths, open and a-glow  
 Thy Homer's Iliad. . . . Dryad tears had drowned  
 The rough Greek type and, as with honey or blood,  
 One crocus with crushed gold  
 Stained the great page that told  
 Of gods that sighed their loves on Ida, long ago.

## VII.

See—for a couch to their ambrosial limbs  
 Even as their golden load of splendour presses  
 The fragrant thyme, a billowing cloud up-swims  
 Of springing flowers beneath their deep caresses,

*Hyacinth, lotus, crocus, wildernesses*

*Of bloom . . .* but clouds of sunlight and of dew  
 Dropping rich balm, round the dark pine-woods curled  
 That the warm wonder of their in-woven tresses,  
 And all the secret blisses that they knew,  
     Where beauty kisses truth  
     In heaven's deep heart of youth,  
 Might still be hidden, as thou art, from the heartless world.

#### VIII.

Even as we found thy book, below these rocks  
 Perchance that strange great eagle's feather lay,  
 When Ganymede, from feeding of his flocks  
     On Ida, vanished thro' the morning gray :  
 Stranger it seemed, if thou couldst cast away  
     Those golden musics as a thing of nought,  
     A dream for which no longer thou hadst need !  
 Ah, was it here then that the break of day  
     Brought thee the substance for the shadow, taught  
     Thy soul a swifter road  
     To ease it of its load  
 And watch this world of shadows as a dream recede ?

#### IX.

We slept ! Darkling we slept ! Our busy schemes,  
 Our cold mechanic world awhile was still ;  
 But O, their eyes are blinded even in dreams  
     Who from the heavenlier Powers withdraw their will :  
 Here did the dawn with purer light fulfil  
     Thy happier eyes than ours, here didst thou see  
     The quivering wonder-light in flower and dew,  
 The quickening glory of the haunted hill,  
     The Hamadryad beckoning from the tree.  
     The Naiad from the stream ;  
     While from her long dark dream  
 Earth woke, trembling with life, light, beauty, through and  
     through.

## X.

And the everlasting miracle of things  
    Flowed round thee, and this dark earth opposed no bar,  
And radiant faces from the flowers and springs  
    Dawned on thee, whispering, *Knowest thou whence we are?*  
Faintly thou heardest us calling thee afar  
    As Hylas heard, swooning beneath the wave,  
    Girdled with glowing arms, while wood and glen  
Echoed his name beneath that rosy star ;  
    And thy farewell came faint as from the grave  
        For very bliss ; but we  
        Could neither hear nor see ;  
And all the hill with *Hylas ! Hylas !* rang again.

## XI.

But there were deeper love-tales for thine ears  
    Than mellow-tongued Theocritus could tell :  
Over him like a sea two thousand years  
    Had swept. They solemnized his music well !  
Farewell ! What word could answer but farewell,  
    From thee, O happy spirit, that couldst steal  
    So quietly from this world at break of day ?  
What voice of ours could break the silent spell  
    Beauty had cast upon thee, or reveal  
        The gates of sun and dew  
        Which oped and let thee through  
And led thee heavenward by that deep enchanted way ?

## XII.

Yet here thou mad'st thy choice : Love, Wisdom, Power,  
    As once before young Paris, they stood here !  
Beneath them Ida, like one full-blown flower,  
    Shed her bloom earthward thro' the radiant air

Leaving her rounded fruit, their beauty, bare  
 To the everlasting dawn ; and, in thy palm  
 The golden apple of the Hesperian isle  
 Which thou must only yield to the Most Fair ;  
 But not to Juno's great luxurious calm,  
 Nor Dian's curved white moon,  
 Gav'st thou the sunset's boon,  
 Nor to foam-bosomed Aphrodite's rose-lipped smile.

## XIII.

Here didst thou make the eternal choice aright,  
 Here, in this hallowed haunt of nymph and faun,  
 They stood before thee in that great new light,  
 The three great splendours of the immortal dawn,  
 With all the cloudy veils of Time withdrawn  
 Or only glistening round the firm white snows  
 Of their pure beauty like the golden dew  
 Brushed from the feathery ferns below the lawn ;  
 But not to cold Diana's morning rose,  
 Nor to great Juno's frown  
 Cast thou the apple down,  
 And, when the Paphian raised her lustrous eyes anew,

## XIV.

Thou from thy soul didst whisper—*in that heaven*  
*Which yearns beyond us ! Lead me up the height !*  
*How should the golden fruit to one be given*  
*Till your three splendours in that Sun unite*  
*Where each in each ye move like light in light ?*  
*How should I judge the rapture till I know*  
*The pain ?* And like three waves of music there  
 They closed thee round, blinding thy blissful sight  
 With beauty and, like one roseate orb a-glow,  
 They bore thee on their breasts  
 Up the sun-smitten crests  
 And melted with thee smiling into the Most Fair.

## XV.

Upward and onward, ever as ye went  
 The cities of the world nestled beneath  
 Closer, as if in love, round Ida, blent  
 With alien hills in one great bridal-wreath  
 Of dawn-flushed clouds ; while, breathing with your breath  
 New heavens mixed with your mounting bliss. Deep eyes,  
 Beautiful eyes, imbrued with the world's tears  
 Dawned on you, beautiful gleams of Love and Death  
 Flowed thro' your questioning with divine replies  
 From that ineffable height  
 Dark with excess of light  
 Where the Ever-living dies and the All-loving hears.

## XVI.

For thou hadst seen what tears upon man's face  
 Bled from the heart or burned from out the brain,  
 And not denied or cursed, but couldst embrace  
 Infinite sweetness in the heart of pain,  
 And heardst those universal choirs again  
 Wherein like waves of one harmonious sea  
 All our slight dreams of heaven are singing still,  
 And still the throned Olympians swell the strain,  
 And, hark, the burden of all—*Come unto Me !*  
 Sky into deepening sky  
 Melts with that one great cry ;  
 And the lost doves of Ida moan on Siloa's hill.

## XVII.

I gather all the ages in my song  
 And send them singing up the heights to thee !  
 Chord by æonian chord the stars prolong  
 Their passionate echoes to Eternity :

Earth wakes, and one orchestral symphony  
Sweeps o'er the quivering harp-strings of mankind ;  
Grief modulates into heaven, hate drowns in love,  
No strife now but of love in that great sea  
Of song ! I dream ! I dream ! Mine eyes grow blind :  
Chords that I not command  
Escape the fainting hand ;  
Tears fall. Thou canst not hear. Thou'rt still too far  
above.

## XVIII.

Farewell ! What word should answer but farewell  
From thee, O happy spirit, whose clear gaze  
Discerned the path—clear, but unsearchable—  
Where Olivet sweetens, deepens, Ida's praise,  
The path that strikes as thro' a sunlit haze  
Through Time to that clear reconciling height  
Where our commingling gleams of godhead dwell ;  
Strikes thro' the turmoil of our darkling days  
To that great harmony where, like light in light,  
Wisdom and Beauty still  
Haunt the thrice-holy hill,  
And Love, immortal Love . . . what answer but farewell ?

## THE END.











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